

IF SHE WILL SHE WILL

Mary A. Denison

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IF SHE WILL SHE WILL

BY

MARY A. DENISON

AUTHOR OF "THAT HUSBAND OF MINE" "THAT WIFE OF MINE"
"TELL YOUR WIFE" "HIS TRIUMPH" "LIKE A GENTLEMAN"
"ROTHMELL" "MR. PETER CREWITT" ETC.

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IF SHE WILL, SHE WILL

P R E F A C E

THAT which a woman wills, she will accomplish, whether it is finding a place for the exercise of her genius, her business capacity, or her affections.

A clear-sighted woman is quick to discern the good or bad qualities of the man who has gained her love. If he is noble to the heart's core, she knows it, and will go through fire and water to uphold him, and to prove her faith in him. If she discerns imperfections, she still often chooses to ignore them, and marry the man, faults and all.

IF SHE WILL, SHE WILL,
is a world-wide proverb; and my little summer story, written as was

"THAT HUSBAND OF MINE,"

to while away an idle hour, neither pretentious nor ambitious, just a story, founded upon an incident that occurred not a hundred years ago, is written — well, it is simply an outcome of

IF SHE WILL, SHE WILL.

THE AUTHOR.

WHAT FARMER BEN SAID

JERUSHA, when she says she *will*,
With sparkles in her eyes,
There's nary use to try and kill
Her folly as it flies.
I jest set down and let her *do*,
As you will hev to, Bill,
And gen'ly I am thankful, too,
That when she *will*, she *will*.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. DAISY	5
II. MARGY	16
III. DISGUISED	22
IV. AMONG THE SHADOWS	36
V. MRS. ST. ALBERT'S OPINION.	41
VI. MARGY WRITES	53
VII. MARGY WRITES	60
VIII. IN THE ORGAN-LOFT.—“WHY CANNOT I LET THAT GIRL ALONE?”	65
IX. “I WISH IT HAD BEEN MY SHROUD” . .	73
X. MARGY WRITES	87
XI. AT THE PARTY	96
XII. WHAT THE RECTOR DID	109
XIII. IMPULSIVE WORDS	117
XIV. MARGY'S CURIOSITY	122
XV. A DECLARATION OF LOVE	135
XVI. A LEAP FOR LIFE	145
XVII. A MORE FORTUNATE WOOER.	152
XVIII. WHAT DAISY THOUGHT	162
XIX. A RED-LETTER DAY	167
XX. HOW DAISY RECEIVED THE NEWS	177
XXI. TEMPLE ASKS FOR DAISY.	185
XXII. MARGY WRITES	196
XXIII. A ROYAL WELCOME	203
XXIV. COUSIN ELEANOR	214
XXV. THE NEW SENATOR MEETS ELEANOR . .	221
XXVI. DAISY HEARS THE NEWS	232
XXVII. ZUE'S REMORSE	244

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXVIII.	DAISY'S LAST SUNDAY IN CHURCH	255
XXIX.	FOR HER COUSIN'S SAKE	265
XXX.	DIAMONDS	270
XXXI.	A BITTER JEALOUSY	276
XXXII.	RECALLED BY DEATH	291
XXXIII.	"I DENY EVERYTHING"	299
XXXIV.	WHAT DAISY FOUND	312
XXXV.	ELEANOR'S LETTER	319
XXXVI.	FAITHFUL TO HER LOVE	325
XXXVII.	AT LAST, TRIUMPH	337

IF SHE WILL, SHE WILL

CHAPTER I.

DAISY.

ARTHUR PRINCE sat in his study alone with his own thoughts.

Around him were all the tools of his craft,— books, paper, and pens.

Beside him, on a small metal reading-stand, a famous book, just at this time holding the attention of the public, was open at the ninth chapter.

The rector had just laid down his pen with something that sounded very like a sigh, and now leaned back against the study-chair, a tall, wide-seated arm-chair that had been made expressly for his grandfather just seventy years before. His glance fell on a small clump of firs, under the shade of which a girl in a Swiss cap sat, indolently happy, enjoying with great apparent pleasure the fresh, balmy air, which now kissed her fair cheek, now ruffled the shining curls that

had in their tints just a suggestion of the red one sometimes seen in gold.

The rector smiled at the sight; but his glance travelled a little farther on, still in the shadow. A broad baby-carriage, over whose pretty pink and white canopy the light and the leaves played at checkers, stood within hand's reach of the half-reclining girl. In its downy depths two babies lay fast asleep. Their faces, more beautiful than any limner's art could reproduce, were not in this man's line of vision, but he knew them by heart. They were his own twin sons. The whir of a sewing-machine reached his ear, blending softly with the twittering of birds and the various sibilant sounds of air, earth, and sky outside his study-window. He knew whose slender fingers were busy over the little garments they loved to adorn; and just at that moment a sweet voice joined in with the pleasant monotone of the wheel, singing,—

“My love loves me, I am content ;
The lily-leaves are white and gold ;
My love is mine, and I am his,”—

Just there another voice intervened,—

“Madam, there is no rice.”

“Send Zue for some,” was the reply.

“Zue is in one of her tantrums. You can't start her alone.”

“Then suppose you go, Margy,” in a coaxing voice, “the walk will do you good;” and whir went the sewing-machine again.

“Yes, very well; and shall I speak for some flour? The barrel is low.”

“You might as well, Margy.”

“And butter? The butter is nearly gone.”

“The butter! O Margy!”

“It’s like riches, madam: it takes to itself wings, and flies.”

“Oh, well, let it fly, Margy. Get anything and everything you need: I can trust you. And don’t be afraid to tell me when things are out. Sometimes you look utterly scared. You didn’t know, perhaps, they had raised my husband’s salary.”

“O madam!” comes in a joyful tone to the rector’s ear. “I declare I am glad!” And whir goes the sewing-machine again.

“Yes; and, O Margy! come back as soon as you can, and bring some one with you, a man if you can find one, to take this machine up-stairs. It’s too near the study.”

“My darling! always thoughtful,” the rector said softly, and began to write, with smiling eyes.

Meantime the young girl under the trees, grown tired of reverie, lifted herself erect, and looked about. The prospect on either hand was an agreeable one. Flowers of every hue, ruby-red, yellow,

and blue, made a brave show on both sides of the garden-path. The girl was like a flower herself, with her great liquid blue eyes, red-brown hair, and complexion like porcelain of the clearest white, tinted with pink on lips and cheeks. They had rightly called her Daisy.

A veritable child of nature she was, in spite of the *Directoire* gown of palest blue, and the little cap in which she playfully simulated the Swiss nurse that her brother could not afford to keep. A sparrow perched upon a twig just over the faces of the sleeping twins. Chat, the old family horse, put his nose over the fence between the pasture and the garden, and gave a resounding neigh.

“Are you glad to see me, old fellow?” laughed Daisy, as she went towards him. The horse looked at her with considering eyes, tossed his mane, let himself be stroked down the nose along the big white curve that sloped between his eyes, then, as if satisfied with her caresses, trotted leisurely to another part of the pasture.

By this time one of the twins was awake, blinking, laughing, and doubling his fists, and Daisy hurried back to her charge. Seizing the handle of the carriage, she began propelling the precious freight towards the road.

“Allow me,” said a pleasant voice; and a tall, handsome man with dark eyes, in which there was

a charm that few could resist, opened the gate for her.

"Oh, thank you!" said Daisy, a smile in her eyes, and an unmistakable scarlet creeping into either smooth cheek.

"Is the rector at home?" he asked, lifting his hat, disclosing a grandly shaped head, about which clustered close, shining auburn curls.

"Yes, indeed," Daisy said, blushing more furiously than ever. "I think, I believe, he is writing his sermon."

"Ah! Then perhaps I had better not disturb him."

"Oh, you will not disturb him!" she said, eagerly and innocently. "I am sure he will see *you*." Then her eyes fell, and the eloquent blood mounted to her temples. She turned away at his pleasant "Thank you" and his lingering gaze, and he went on towards the rectory.

"To think he should see me in this ridiculous cap!" Daisy soliloquized. She snatched it off, and ran back for her hat, which hung by the strings from a low bough. "I don't mind caring for the babies, but I don't want to look like a nurse-maid. What must he have thought of me—but then, why should I care what he thinks of me?"

The Fairstock doctor came along in his natty little carriage. His white hair looked like a wig,

it was so bushy and curly : his large, merry blue eyes lighted up at sight of Daisy.

“Taking the youngsters for an airing, eh, Miss Daisy ?” he said, driving a trifle slower than his fat old horse was wont to jog. “How well the twins look ! By St. Gregory ! I never saw two prettier boys. Did you know there was scarlet fever over in Mossy Hollow ? Two children down with it. I trust to goodness it won’t spread. It played havoc here four years ago, when these children were in sky-land. Well, I must drive on. All well at the house ? Rector busy ? Remarkably healthy in Fairstock just now. Please God, I hope it will keep so. How bright the ivy is on the sunny side ! Good-day.” And on went the fat old horse.

Daisy had only been able to say yes and no. Her clear eyes, full of soul-light, smilingly followed the retreating chaise. She liked the old doctor, who had always been very kind to her,—the kindness of a serious adorer mingled with fatherly interest. Margy, who lived in the family, said that all the men, young and old, were in love with Daisy. The old doctor’s merry greeting had restored the girl to her normal self. At that moment Rush Severn, professor of music, and organist at St. Mary’s, turned a corner. His long, curling locks were flying under a sombrero of

remarkable proportions, and his dreamy, pre-occupied air stamped him as a man different from others. He came out of his reverie, however, at sight of Daisy, looking slightly conscious as he lifted his hat.

"Lovely day," he said, his beautiful face aglow. "By the way, I have something here that I meant to give you last rehearsal night." He took the roll of music from under his arm, deftly subtracted a sheet of note-paper, and handed it to her. Then, with a bow and glance of profound admiration, he steered round the carriage, lifted his hat again, and went on.

"He is very handsome," said Daisy to herself, placing the roll at the feet of the twins, and starting on again. "I wonder if there is Spanish blood in his veins. I never look at him but I think of a beautiful woman. How different from Mr. Temple! in whose face there is something almost divine. Why should I be so nervous in his presence, I wonder? I never am with anybody else. It can't be because he takes any particular notice of me, for he don't. He just treats me with ordinary courtesy. He looks like some of the old saints we see in pictures with a strange light about their heads. I wonder what it is that attracts me so! He has by no means such a beautiful face as Rush Severn, about whom the girls all rave, and

yet I like him a thousand times better. But what nonsense!" And she turned her attention to the twins, propping them up, shaking their pillows, and forcing her mind back to its natural level as she shook off the reflections that seemed to her almost unmaidenly.

"Goodness me, Miss Daisy! And here you are dragging that heavy carriage! It's too much for you; you'll get a stoop in the shoulders. I'd take it if that cherub of mine would carry some of these things."

It was Margy who spoke. She had come from the store lower down in the town, her arms full of bundles.

"Now you turn right about, Miss Daisy, and let me fix things. There, and there, and there!" she added in a voice of satisfaction, as she put a bundle in this corner of the roomy carriage, and another in that. Daisy laughed and let her do as she pleased.

"I must hurry home," continued the woman, "or there'll be somebody there teasing your brother's life out of him. They don't often trouble him on sermon-days when *I'm* round."

"Ah! but you'll be too late for one of the tramps, as you call them all," said Daisy, a merry twinkle in her eye. "Mr. Temple is there."

The woman paled from temples to lips. Her

brows contracted, and involuntarily she clutched the handle of the carriage with a tighter clasp.

"What's his first name?" she asked, trying to steady her voice.

"Andrew,—a beautiful name, isn't it?"

"Great God!" the woman said to herself—"then it must be he! I was sure, before—but now!" she drew a long breath, a shadow crossed her face. "So he is there, is he?" she said with a shiver, her voice so changed that it might have been that of another woman. Then she pressed her lips together, opened them, turned her head away with a gesture of disappointment or disgust, and was silent.

"He often comes," said Daisy, her eyes shining: "you must have seen him."

"Yes, at a distance. Zue always lets him in—he's tall—and—and good-looking."

"He is just splendid!" said Daisy; then, at Margy's strange glance, she hurried to say, feeling her cheeks burn, "I met Doctor Lamprey, and he says there's scarlet fever over at Mossy Hollow. I hate the very sound, so does Mary. She's more afraid of that than any other disease."

"It's a good ways off," said Margy, in a muttering tone; "besides, there's worse things can come into a house than scarlet fever."

"O Margy! nothing nearly so bad," said Daisy. "These children have always been delicate."

"Well, I guess there's no danger," said the woman, adding in an undertone, "not from that."

She was straight and tall, this serving-woman, with a superb figure. Her shoulders were broad, her features large but noble. There was a ruggedness of nerve and strength noticeable in every movement of her finely formed arms, that compelled admiration. Her eyes were large, dark, and piercing. Always alert and faithful, she was a treasure indeed in the rector's little family. Her devotion to their interests, and her almost slavish adherence to duty, made her invaluable, both as a servant and a friend. It was she who kept bores away on sermon-day, who indeed defended the sacredness and privacy of the study at all times, dealt with tramps, scolded gossips, and, according to the opinion of one of the latter, held a high hand in the minister's affairs. Yet, with all this, she was never officious; and her humility, joined to such an herculean frame, was something wonderful.

Following her, yet keeping at a certain distance, was a girl who might have been eight years old, or fourteen, according to the mood which happened to possess her. There were times when she was beautiful; at others, her evil, almost elfish, expression was a terror to the beholder. She had her mother's dark eyes and regular features, only at

times the former held a gleam that was dangerous. At the rectory they all pitied her; and, as the mother's active service made up for the child's deficiencies, she generally came and went at her own sweet will. Only Daisy could sometimes charm the girl out of her furies, or detect, now and then, that she had in her nature a few elements of what we call the divine.

"I'll go in the back way," said Margy, gathering up her bundles. "It's almost time for tea." Then she looked irresolutely at the study-windows. "Miss Daisy," she said, with a manner that suggested she had something of great importance to say. Daisy turned to her, all attention, expecting she hardly knew what, seeing the woman's tense expression and set lips. "You had better be careful," — then she stopped, — "careful of the babies," she added. "Can you take them in by yourself?"

"To be sure I can," said Daisy, who felt so certain that the woman had not said what she intended to say, that she was a little provoked. "What are you looking at me so, for?" she further asked. The woman said nothing, but hurried round by the side entrance, and went into her own part of the house, leaving Daisy standing on the steps, and wondering what had come over her.

CHAPTER II.

MARGY.

YEARS before, when Arthur Prince had elected to be a missionary in the slums of New York, he had become interested in a young woman whose destitute condition had been brought to his notice.

"She's that savage," said one of the alley gamins, "that you wouldn't want to offer her bread if she was starving."

One evening he followed her to her home, a miserable room on the first floor of one of the meanest tenement-houses in the city. The young man stepped up to the window, and was trying to get a glimpse of the wretched interior, when a policeman touched him on the shoulder.

"We all know you, Mr. Prince, sir, and what work you are doing," he said, "but I wouldn't try hereabouts if I was you. The woman's a she-devil, and it would be like her to do you a harm, for her hand seems against everybody."

"Because everybody's hand is against her, poor soul!" said the young man compassionately.

"She has such a face that I can't see her go to ruin, if there is any way to save her. She's not like the other people about here. I'm sure she comes of a good family, and has been, if not rich, better off than most."

"I know that, Mr. Prince; them's the worst when they're down on their luck. Of course the likes of you feels charitable, and all that, but I'd advise you to let this girl alone. I would, indeed. She do hates to be helped even, and her temper is awful."

"I must think it over, then," said the young missionary. "Something tells me that under all this woman's seeming hardness, there is a noble nature. But I will heed what you say. I will watch and not visit her."

He had turned to leave the place. The watchman's burly figure moved off on his accustomed beat, when suddenly a woman rushed past him, with something wrapped up in her arms, and he knew as well as if he had looked in her face, who it was.

"I must follow her," he said under his breath. "She means to do some terrible deed. Something tells me that this may be the turning-point in her life. If it means death, the murder of that innocent, I must follow her."

And he did, gliding round corners, going

through alleys where a dog would hardly seek for a bone, till at last the long, tar-smelling wharf with its millions of merchandise piled here and there under the roofs of mighty storehouses came in view, and she, looking round now and then, and he dodging to prevent recognition, gained the rough, buttressed edge under which the waters gurgled and sullenly lapped the huge beams, green with slime, which held the great wharf in leash.

Then he stole out into the one gleam of moonlight afforded by a parting cloud, and which reached like a lance across the water, from where she stood. He laid his hand on her shoulder. She did not even start, only turned to him a livid face, so white in outline, so black in shadow, that it seemed like the face of a hunted spirit, waiting to be avenged on its destroyer.

"You have followed me," she said.

"Yes," was his reply. "You know me for a friend, Margy," he went on, in the same quiet tone: "what are you going to do?"

"Drown myself, and this:" she tapped the bundle, her fingers looking weird in the moonlight.

"You shall not. I will not let you."

"You!" and her set lips parted in a scornful smile. "As if you could help it! Do you know how strong I am?"

"Too strong, I hope, to commit an act of such folly, to throw your life away. Think of it! And what comes after?" he asked, in the same soft, low tones.

"Nothing, I hope. I don't care what. Why should I? There's nothing to live for. People seem to hate and despise me, and I hate and despise them. It's hard work to get bread, only bread; and I won't beg, I can't fight, I'm tired out. I hate myself, life, this child, everything."

"At least, leave the child, if you are determined to destroy yourself," he said, to turn her thoughts. "Some day it may thank me for life."

"Never," she said, with bitter energy. "I have suffered too much. I have had nothing but hate and despair in my heart. The child is a thing of hate and malice. Besides, I should only leave her to the streets."

"I promise you I will care for her, get her a good home, help her to grow up in the right way. If you will let me, I will help you, if you will only have patience."

"You — help me! and set people talking," she flamed out. "You're too good a man. Let me alone."

"I don't care for people, I'm after a soul," he said, "something precious in the eyes of a pitying Father. The talk of people is that," and he

snapped his fingers. "Don't fling away a life that might be made useful to others. You are not fit to die."

The woman turned her face seaward. All the wide black water, restless as her soul, seemed inviting her to make the daring leap. She looked up at the sky. It, too, was dark. Then she shivered.

"I am not a light woman," she moaned. "I have always tried to be honest, but I won't starve."

"Try once again," he said softly; and in those three words was the very music of heaven, he so yearned to save her, and it sank into her heart. "I can get you help, work, friends, if you will only be patient and kind. You have never been kind."

"I know it; because I thought you might, perhaps, be like all the rest, and I hated you, hated everything," she said tremulously. "I have been so badly treated," and a sob choked her voice. "But I should like — oh, if I could only be trusted!" she cried, a passionate wail in her tones.

"You shall be. Come with me. I will find you a place. Go back to the old home for tonight, and believe me. As I said before, be patient, believe there are those in the city would be glad to help you."

"If you will! If I know there is only one to stand by me, I will do it," she said firmly. "But I must keep my child."

"You shall keep your child," he said, and she did. Kind friends were raised up, but no one took the place of this fervent-hearted young missionary; and when, one year afterward, he was married to the girl he had loved since they were children together, Margy went with them and had remained with them ever since, and Zue was the only child of the house for many years, when the twins were born.

CHAPTER III.

DISGUISED.

THE sewing-machine was still whirring, and all the drowsy, outdoor music subsiding into a continuous monotone, as the day waned to its close. Page after page of exquisite penmanship had fallen to right and left of the rector's busy hands for the last hour, and now he was nearly through.

Meantime, at a window facing south, overlooking the charming outlines of gray and green hills in whose hollows the setting sun was pouring cups of liquid gold, while the clouds sent shifting shadows adown their undulating sides, Andrew Temple sat with a book in his hand.

He was a tall man, somewhat spare, though the grace of his manner made his figure appear of perfect symmetry. Nothing nobler could be imagined than the contour of his head and face. Though eminent in the world of letters, he was as simple in his ways as a child. There were too many lines in his face for a man not yet thirty-six ; yet they gave added dignity and a certain quality

of expression that emphasized the nobility of the features. A more than casual observer would say that this man had suffered, that some sharp, fierce struggle with suffering had accentuated the character of his expression, which was so marked, and yet so softened, that it served the same purpose in him that beauty would in a woman, attracted and delighted the eye. People looked twice at him, then again, drawn by that irresistible blending of sweetness and sadness, and the charm of his large dark eyes. His smile was something almost divine. There was an expression so altogether unworldly, so saintly in its radiance, that one waited for it as for something rarely seen, wondering the while what processes of thought, or familiarity with unworldly things, had placed him beyond the plane of ordinary men.

Yet this man was almost as far from being a saint in the ordinary acceptation of the term, as was Lucifer when he fell. Not that he was immoral in any sense of the word, or wanting in outward respect for conventional religious observances, but at heart he was everything that implies an unbeliever. "Give me the proof," was his constant call.

He had studied the character of Arthur Prince from the time he had first made his acquaintance, three years before, when hundreds of lives were

in peril on board an excursion steamer, and he had worked side by side with the man he considered only an enthusiast — both men cool, calm, heroic, self-forgetting, animated as they were by utterly different principles. He remembered afterwards that the rector had put his wife aboard one of the boats, that she cried passionately that she could not and would not go without him, till he said, "Mary, remember your marriage vow. Never before have I said, 'Obey me:' now I do." Then there was a quick, embrace, a tearful utterance, "We shall be together soon, either here or there," and Mary went down to her possible doom, as the rector silently lifted eyes and fingers toward the unseen country.

Andrew Temple had never forgotten that scene, — the lofty serenity, the manly tenderness, and the air of kingly command that seemed part and parcel of the man. He had since corresponded with the rector occasionally; and within the past month, having come to stay a while at Fairstock, he took the first opportunity that occurred to renew the acquaintance, and, that he might not sail under false colors, frankly stated his own views, his willingness to be convinced if in error, his admiration of certain tenets, though unable to accept them, and thoroughly won the heart of the man so opposite to him in all that stimulates a

religious faith, or constitutes a religious life. He never disturbed the rector, as some reckon disturbance. They sat together side by side ; and one would have thought them two brothers, even when they discussed matters on which they were at variance. It rarely occurred to the rector that an antagonist was near when Temple was present. So he wrote on and on, this afternoon, till at last he flung the final page down with an exultant “Amen! so mote it be !” and turned his bright face toward his visitor, holding his hand out cordially.

“I was hard at it when you came in, but I knew you wouldn’t mind. Glad you stayed. How are you? And what news do you bring from the busy world outside? How goes on the famous law-case? Loosen the cords of your eloquent tongue, and tell me. You always tone me up, and I confess that I am fearfully exhausted. It seemed to me while writing that I was obeying the behest of something more powerful than my own mind, and I couldn’t have stopped to save my existence. There — now I am comfortable.”

He had thrown himself upon the great square lounge, heaping the pillows about his head. His brilliant eyes still shed the fire of thought, a roseate glow lingered about his face, the thin but well-formed lips alone were pale, and his luxuriant

dark hair, thrown back from his temples, was in striking contrast with the white gleam of his forehead.

"You look very well satisfied," said his visitor, putting his book aside.

"I am satisfied, though I shouldn't say that. No mere man can dare to be satisfied with the meagre work he does, even if it is his best. Perhaps I should say I am happy, having done the duty which I always approach with a sort of reluctance. There's Beach, of St. Paul's, says he's never so happy as when he is getting up a sermon; but I am never happy till it's done. But never mind. You don't care about such things—tell me about your case."

"You mistake: I do care," said Temple. "I am always craving for spiritual aspirations, particularly when with you. I'd give the world to think as you do."

"If you had it to give," laughed the rector.

"Well, then, the epitome of what is the world in my possession,—my doubts, my facts, my very existence."

"Well, perhaps you'll get there sometime, with an entirely different sacrifice," said the rector, "and then how strange the Andrew Temple of now will seem to you. But come, you brainy infidel, let's talk of other things. Haven't you something funny to tell me?"

“What! something funny, after” —

“Exactly,” responded his friend; “that’s over and done with. What is writ is writ, and I wish the whole world could hear it. There’s egotism for you. But I’m tired, my head feels cobwebby. I want to baste my theological baked meats with a little illogical gravy. Don’t you see? You generally have a fund of anecdote. Bring it out, parade your witticisms, marshal your regiments of small talk. One can’t live in the clouds more than an hour at a time, — at least I can’t.”

“Well, here goes, then,” said the other, lifting his square shoulders, his luminous eyes growing darker as he mentally reviewed the scene he intended to portray.

“One of the witnesses in this case of Hobbs and Hamline — by the way, that first name ought to be Hoggs to make euphony and sense perfect — is a thick-headed Irishman, who, unlike most of his countrymen, is somewhat stupid. Broome was the lawyer for the defence. Broome is a slight man with the reddest face imaginable, topped by a shock of flaming hair, and a mustache to match. Of course with such a physique he is a peppery little fellow.

“‘Did you know the prisoner?’ he asked of Pat.

“‘Do I know my own mother?’ asks Pat, with a fine sneer.

"'That's not an answer to the question,' said Broome tartly. 'Did you know the prisoner?'

"'Did I? Begorry, I might hev knowed him and then agin forgot,' said Pat, warily. 'Sure, if ye'd ast my father's son if he knowed his own daddy'—

"'Silence!' thundered Broome, for the whole court was giggling.

"'Silence it is,' was the meek rejoinder.

"'I warn you, my man, that before you know it, you will be committed for contempt of court,' says Broome.

"'I've not said a word of contempt,' answers Pat. 'I'm a man as is careful of spaking his convictions.'

"Broome, by this time, had worked himself into a rage.

"'Will you say yes or no? Do you know the prisoner?' he roars.

"'Know it is, then, surr,' was the answer. It sounded like a denial.

"'But you intimated a moment ago that you did,' cried Broome. 'Commit this man for contempt of court.'

"'Sure, an' didn't I jest say in them four words, know him I did?' was the quaking answer. 'Av coorse I knows him, ever since he sold me a cow for a yearling calf;' and then Pat's eloquence

was squelched. There, do you see any fun in that?"

"Considerable humor," said the rector, who had listened smiling, his hands clasped over his head. "Any more?"

Mary's face appeared between the folds of the *portière*.

"Dear," she said, "supper is ready."

Andrew Temple sprang up and made for the door.

"Come, now, you're not going," said Prince, as he lifted his long limbs from the lounge.

"I must, thank you. I"—

"No, I say," repeated the rector. "Mary, come hold his arms. He shall stay by force."

"Daisy," as the girl's bright face appeared, "go hide his hat, quick."

Daisy ran blushing and laughing into the hall.

"You have never eaten salt in my house, and I propose to keep you this time," said the rector.

"Very well, an I must, I must, I suppose," said Temple.

Daisy ran out to tell Margy another plate and cup and saucer were needed.

"When you keep house I'll come over every other night," said the rector.

"Yes, when," the other made reply, a shadow crossing his face. "If I wait for good comrade-

ship on that contingency, I shall never see you at my table."

"Nonsense," said the rector, as he led the way out to the dining-room.

"Bachelors are always a despondent class of men," he went on, lifting the cup of tea his wife handed him. "Think of your living to this age and never finding a mate! Why, man, you must be adamant."

At that moment, by chance, Andrew Temple met Daisy's eyes. He set his cup down even in the act of raising it to his lips. Those eyes which had become heaven to him, the only heaven he knew, were swimming in liquid light. The rich red lips tremulous with smiles, the beauty and innocence of her face and manner, the winning way she looked at him, made him almost lose control of himself.

"Why did I stay?" he asked himself fiercely, and then ventured another glance. This time she was answering her sister's question about the twins.

"They were both sleeping sweetly when I left them," she said, smiling.

"Were they? I fancied I heard a cry," said Mary. "I believe I will send for Margy, and let her go up-stairs. Besides, we want more bread."

She rang the bell. Margy did not answer with

her usual promptitude. When she did, a transformation had taken place in her appearance. She had bundled up her face, and thrown a handkerchief about her head, which fell low upon her forehead, so that only her striking dark eyes were visible.

Mary looked her astonishment.

"What in the world has Margy disfigured herself in that way for?" the rector asked.

"She is often taken suddenly with neuralgia. I suppose she has an attack," said Mary. The woman had gone up-stairs.

"She was well enough just now," said Daisy: "it must have been very sudden."

They adjourned to the parlor after tea, where Daisy was prevailed upon to sing, and, after one song, more were called for. Then several of the vestrymen came in and carried off the rector for a private chat in the church-study. Daisy and Temple were left alone. He stood on the left of the piano, selecting music from the rack. Daisy was very happy, though he stood there in the most commonplace manner and said the most commonplace things.

"I don't care for love-songs," he said, placing one or two of them aside, "but almost any other sentiment pleases me. This, for instance," and he lifted a serenade to the music-rack. "Your voice is just fitted for it. Oh, yes, you will sing that."

"I don't believe I have time," she said, looking over to the clock. "It's rehearsal to-night. Pray tell me what is the hour by your watch. That clock is a very uncertain reminder. Half-past eight! I am positively late," she cried, springing up. "Mr. Severn will never forgive me. He depends upon me to set an example of punctuality to the rest."

"*He* is sure to be there early, of course," said Temple.

He stood back a little and watched her as she shut the piano, straightened the scarf that fell over the cover with deft fingers, and put away her music. It occurred to him that she did not appear to be in a desperate hurry. Should he stay, or go? Here were books and papers and comfort. Outside was the gathering darkness; home was a boarding-house. The study through which they passed looked pretty in the blended fire and lamp light. A fire was always kindled at twilight. He stood there, tall and straight and handsome, debating within himself what he should do.

Daisy had meanwhile gone up-stairs. If her feet had been wings she could not have felt lighter or more exultant. She did not ask herself why. It was enough that she was happy, happier than she had ever been in all her life before. The survival of glow and color that had made the presence of the man below stairs so attractive, kindled yet

in her eyes and cheeks. With deft, soft touches she arrayed herself for her short walk. Would he still be there when she went down-stairs? He had not said good-night. She listened for the shutting of the outside door. Then she laughed at herself as she drew on her jacket, and again as she threw over her head the white wool scarf she always wore of evenings.

"I'll just look in upon Mary," she whispered. Mary was sorting some clothes for the twins, who lay rosy and sweet, asleep in their little bed.

"Aren't you late?" Mary said. Then she looked in the radiant face beside her.

"Why, you are absolutely brilliant, Daisy. I never saw you with such color. Has Mr. Temple gone?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Daisy with charming indifference, considering that it was assumed; but feeling the heat in her cheeks, she made for the door.

Lightly as she went down-stairs, Temple must have heard her. He stood in the hall pulling on his coat. The light was low, and in the shadow he looked white and cold. Then he opened the front door and held it for her.

"I hope you won't object to my company," he said. "I am going the same way."

"Oh, no!" Daisy made faint reply, half beside

herself with happiness. All that was happening was so new and strange. This man's manner held a certain deference, a new element of — what should she call it — tenderness? His voice was so low, sweet, and caressing. And now that he was walking alongside of her, caring for her comfort, she felt herself of new importance.

The night was dark, but the darkness was not opaque. Heaven was alight with myriad stars. The bright windows in the houses they passed looked cheerful. There was a song in the air, for some far-off bells were ringing. Most of the time they walked in silence, till at last the dark towers of the church loomed up. There Temple stopped.

"Won't you go in?" Daisy asked timidly, looking up.

"I think not," he said with some hesitation, and then, "I don't know but what I will."

"Oh, yes, do," said Daisy, a little touch of triumph in her voice. "We're going to sing Sullivan's *Te Deum*. You will like it."

He went into the body of the church, which was dimly lighted. The interior looked vast, solemn, unearthly. On the reredos an illumination from the study threw into strong relief the face of Christ, and one other face of angelie sweetness, that of St. John. The choir was opposite the chancel, so that one had to turn round to see the

singers. Andrew Temple took the corner of a pew about midway of the central aisle, then be-thought himself and went farther on and in one of the side seats, where he could see the singers. The same light that brought out the faces on the painted reredos, struck his pale, refined features.

The gleam of the choir-lamps on the polished tops of the pews, the still shadows everywhere, the sense of his being the only person present in the body of the house, made him feel ill at ease. Once or twice he made up his mind to leave. There were important letters waiting to be answered; but still he stayed, while the rustling of leaves and subdued talk and laughter went on up-stairs.

CHAPTER IV.

AMONG THE SHADOWS.

"OH, here comes Daisy! Well, Miss Punctuality, we've been waiting for you a good half-hour," one of the girls cried out, as Daisy made her appearance, flushed and breathing quickly, from the exertion of running up-stairs.

"We're all here before you, this time!" said Nellie Ray, a slender blonde:

"So I see," said Daisy quietly.

Rush Severn stood at the side of the organ, looking at her. He, too, had been waiting, and now the plethoric wheezing of the organ reminded him that he had set the boy to blowing. It was a new boy, and he called out to him to stop while he mounted the tall bench, and adjusted the music. Then came the usual programme,—search for music-books, repetitions of chords and harmonies, snatches of tunes, the leader's sonorous criticisms, silences, coquetting on the part of some of the pretty girls with either the tenor or the organist, whispering, suppressed giggling, and occasionally

a reprimand that kept them all still for five minutes.

Andrew Temple sat below, scarcely pleased as yet, and quite lost in meditation, till suddenly the voice he loved but had never really heard till then, welled up in a flood of sweet melody, and the words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," rang out like bugle-tones through all the lofty space. The words struck each with its own momentum of force upon his heart.

When he looked up, scarcely breathing, he could not well see the singer. The gas was so arranged as to throw the light upon the books, consequently the faces were all in shadow.

Never in her life had Daisy sung as she did now. The organ was trumpet-toned, but it did not overpower the clear, sweet voice that now soared higher, fuller, till the man below bowed his head and put his hand to his eyes. His pulses throbbed madly.

"Remarkable voice, isn't it?" Starting, Temple looked up to encounter a pair of lovely gray eyes, a face arch in expression, surmounting a lithe little figure neatly robed in a dark-blue tailor-made serge costume.

"I shouldn't wonder if they were playing poker in the study, should you?" was her next remark, as she sat down in the seat in front of him, an innocent wonder in her face.

"Playing poker!" and that was all Temple could say.

"It *does* sound irreverent, don't it? But, then, clergymen sometimes seek recreation in that way, particularly of a Saturday night," she went on in a grave voice. "But I do think they should find some other place, don't you?"

"How do you know they are playing poker?" he asked.

"I don't know,—how should I? they won't let me into the study. Even my immaculate Hugh plays cards sometimes. You've noticed the shining summit of the warden who carries the plate down the right-hand aisle, haven't you? I call him an animated ramrod, he is so straight. He wouldn't stoop to pick up a twenty-dollar gold-piece, and he never bends backward. He is simply a figure 1 with legs. You mustn't think I'm not proud of him: I am, very. Hear that dear girl sing! She certainly must have a nightingale imprisoned in her throat. I don't in the least know how a nightingale sings, but it must be like. I'm very fond of Daisy Prince. She and I are great cronies. She'll tell you so."

The man was beginning to be interested in this little woman, whose mobile face flashed all over with smiles and dimples, while her eyes talked even more eloquently than her lips.

"Miss Daisy has a wonderful voice," he said, while the sudden silence emphasized his words.

"It do seem like a nangel ob light floatin' roun' in de upper air, fo' shu, chile," said the little woman, with such a purely African accent that he started. "That's what my old nurse would say," she added with an arch smile. "But Daisy comes of a singing family. Her mother had a glorious voice. It's hereditary," she continued. "You observe that I place the accent on the third syllable, which I assure you is the correct form. I am compiling a new dictionary, in which I change the pronunciation of words in ordinary use to suit the modern style. We are advancing in everything else, religion included. One gets weary of the ancients,—at least I do; and that is why I am compiling this new work."

"Indeed! It is a labor of love, then," said Temple, more and more convinced that the woman was a "little off," as he designated it to himself.

"Allie!" called a voice out of the darkness. A tall, slender figure came into view.

"That's my incomparable Hugh," the little woman half whispered; then, turning, asked, "Did you get through your little game?"

"Little game of what, my dear?" he asked.

"Poker, to be sure."

"My dear, what nonsense!" exclaimed her hus-

band. "What possible connection is there between poker and a vestry-meeting? Is this Mr. Temple? I met you in town once or twice." He came forward to shake hands. "Alice, you provoking little woman," he went on, laughing, "what will Mr. Temple think of you?"

"What *do* you think of me, Mr. Temple?" asked the audacious little lady. "Never mind, you needn't tell me now. I'm going up to see Daisy — Oh! but suppose you introduce me, husband? Be very particular and get the whole name, — Mrs. Alice Torrent Demetrius St. Albert. I forgot all about the etiquette of the thing."

"I think you have introduced yourself," said her husband, laughing at her droll manner. "And now you can go to your friend, while I talk with Mr. Temple."

CHAPTER V.

MRS. ST. ALBERT'S OPINION.

THERE was a pause in the exercises up-stairs. Rush Severn was leaning from his perch talking to Daisy, and looking like a handsome Greek, his finely cut features silhouetted against the dark red of the organ. All the girls were jealous of Daisy, and, as girls will, chaffed her to her face, and talked against her behind her back.

"Professor, if you ever will have done talking to Miss Prince," said Nellie Ray, "I have something to ask you."

Upon that Daisy turned away with a reddening cheek, and would have no more to say to Rush Severn, who, much annoyed, came down from the organ and mingled with the girls, who immediately surrounded him.

"Who in the world is that man down there talking to one of the wardens?" asked the alto, Rose Dimmock, of Daisy. "I've been trying to think, for I have seen him before. He certainly is handsome."

"You mean Mr. Andrew Temple," said Daisy, her speech and manner as careless as was compatible with the quick rush of feeling that thrilled her whenever she looked that way.

"Oh, I know! Temple! It's that free-thinker who writes for the *General Review*. Why, he's an infidel, or an atheist. Papa thinks him splendid; that is, he has a splendid genius; but, do you know, I wouldn't be seen talking with him—a man who believes in nothing good. I wonder how he happens to be here to-night."

"He came with me," said Daisy quickly. "Infidel or not, he is one of my brother's friends. And you are mistaken in thinking that he believes in nothing good. You were never more mistaken in your life."

"All the same, father says he is a dangerous man," said Rose. "He certainly is handsome. Probably Mr. Prince knows nothing at all about his opinions, or I'm sure he wouldn't want him for a friend. I shouldn't want to know him."

"Probably you will never have the opportunity," said Daisy dryly, but the words of the girl had planted a sting in her bosom. It was impossible not to be somewhat influenced by what Rose had said in her unkind comments on Temple. It put her out of chord with him for the moment, although she would not have acknowledged it.

It never occurred to her that it might be a fit of jealous impertinence in Rose, because the handsome organist made his preference only too apparent; for Rose was very much in love with Rush Severn, and, before Daisy's advent, he had been very attentive to her, so she felt a certain sense of pleasure in stabbing Daisy with her sharp tongue.

Meanwhile Rush Severn had swung himself up on the organ-bench; and, annoyed that Daisy persisted in ignoring him, he began playing a low, tender prelude on the upper bank of keys, just as Mrs. St. Albert made her appearance in the doorway, her bright, provoking face full of mischief.

"O Daisy, you little minx!" she broke out, as she came tripping towards her, ignoring all the rest, save by a mere glance of recognition. "I hope you are through with that horrible practice. I want to talk to you. Let me say just here," she added in a whisper, "that he is enchanting — perfectly delightful: in fact, his heredity is written on his face, and such a face! Don't mind me, girls," she said louder; "go on with your practice. I only want Daisy. She's no account, you know, only on Sundays;" and, with a mock grimace, that only made her look prettier than ever, she drew Daisy aside.

The organist looked cross. He liked Mrs. St. Albert; she was one of his favorites, and paid

almost half of his salary; but just now he was in the mood to take offence easily.

"The practice must go on, Mrs. St. Albert," he said stiffly.

"Certainly," said Mrs. St. Albert, with one of her sweetest smiles, "only you must do without Daisy. She has sung enough. Nightingales have delicate throats. Come on, my dear, where we shall not disturb them," continued the little woman, her gray eyes sparkling. "Now, Mr. Rush Severn, you have my gracious permission to proceed."

The organist struck the keys an energetic blow, and the choir closed up without Daisy.

"Who were you talking about just now?" asked Daisy. She knew very well, but a sudden hunger had come upon her to hear more.

"His name is Temple," said Mrs. St. Albert. "My adorable Hugh introduced me,—or rather, I introduced myself. But, my dear, I grieve to say he is not all he seems."

"What can you mean?" Daisy asked, laughing at her droll expression.

"I mean, you spotless child, that he is a wolf in the fold which you and I barricade with our prayer-books. I mean that his intellect is gigantic, while his faith might be represented by the cipher 0. Don't you understand? He is infidel, atheist,

visionary, and diffuse in his anti-theological opinions. After talking with him for ten minutes or so, I have fathomed the man body and soul. It doesn't take *me* long, I assure you. And then when I accused Hugh of playing poker in the study with the rector"—

"O Mrs. St. Albert!" gasped Daisy, "my brother never played cards in his life. Poker! and with the vestrymen!"

"Can you think of anything more ludicrous?" asked Mrs. St. Albert, in her suave manner. "I couldn't, and so I pictured them: my owl-like husband in all the serenity of glistening baldness; Dr. Lamprey with his don't-let-us-pray expression, and his under lip drawn down; Mr. Pounder, looking both ways,—you know how he squints. Oh, it is exquisite! I can see it now. But say, yo' chile, what fo' shu yo' have to do wid dat brack infidel? 'Fore de Lawd, I warns ye, chile."

"Why, he is a friend of my brother's," said Daisy, laughing.

"How long has yo' had de nestimabul privilege of his 'quaintance?'" was the next question, asked with true African quaintness, and an ominous twinkle of the eyes that upset Daisy's dignity again.

"For a month or so. He don't come to the rectory very often," she answered, "but my brother

seems very fond of him." Daisy lifted her eyes, and then they fell, while quick blushes kindled under them.

"Oh! I see!" exclaimed the little woman, tying the strings of her bonnet as she talked. "He is dear brother's friend, consequently he is mine. He is intellectual, interesting, and, in spite of his shortcomings, handsome as a god. Just the man exactly; just the reticent, fascinating, romantic personage to take a young girl's fancy."

"Nonsense! Mrs. St. Albert," said Daisy, with sudden indignant warmth. "You have no right to talk to me like that."

"Yes, I has, honey. I's de gargin of innercense whensoeber I see it in danger. How long has de good man ob de rectory knowed dis yer Marse Temple, honey? Wha's de matter ob his habin a family — wife an chilln's, maybe?"

Daisy shrank from her with wild, incredulous eyes.

"O Mrs. St. Albert, how can you?" she cried with a sort of horror. "I *know* he's not married from what he has said about having no home and no ties. And what if he were? What is it to me? What should *I* care? What would brother care? It's — it's so ridiculous!" she almost sobbed, and then tried to laugh, in order to hide her emotion.

"You sweet, pallid little goose," said Mrs. St. Albert, with her drollest expression, and a pretty caress that Daisy tried her best to shrink from; "can't you let me suppose a case? That dreadfully familiar friend of mine, Hugh St. Albert, is so proud of his ancestry, that he has imbued me with similar sentiments. And yet he had the misfortune to be born in North Carolina, for which mishap I sincerely pity him; so don't be angry with me for wanting to know your friend's antecedents. And now I must go. That saintly Hugh is waiting for me, and I perceive by the motion of his gloved forefinger that he expects me to abridge my little visit, and shorten my final remarks. Farewell, then. I rather think they are on the last amen; how they do hold on, to be sure. So, the howling is done. Well, my dear,"—to Daisy's answering look,—"without you, that is simply what it is, howling."—"The little goose is dead in love with him," she added, *sotto voce*, as she kissed Daisy and went her way out of the choir, with a bright nod to each of the singers, and a parting smile to Rush Severn, who returned it with a startlingly dignified bow, and a wish, registered behind his teeth, not exactly complimentary.

The singers went in a body down-stairs, laughing and chatting. Daisy happened to be next to Rush Severn.

- "You will allow me the pleasure of going home with you?" he said, with an adoring glance that was lost in the semi-darkness.

"If—I may have an escort," Daisy answered haltingly.

"Has your brother waited for you?" asked the young professor.

"I think not; he has probably gone," and now they were in the vestibule. Temple stood leaning against the south door. He looked critically at the young organist, who tossed his leonine curls and gave him back a somewhat contemptuous glance.

"Very handsome," was Temple's first thought, "and she is with him. Just the sort to catch the fancy of a girl. Well, better so."

Daisy went rather ahead of her escort on the stairs. For the world she would not have appeared too willing to meet the man who stood half in shadow, his superb figure outlined against the wall, but some occult impression made her long to get beyond the sphere of the professor for fear that Temple would disappear.

"I am going your way again," he said quietly, smiling. Rush Severn heard him, and drew back.

"That man!" he said to himself, and a jealous pain seized his heart. Most of the girls were going his way, and he walked with them, silent and moody.

When Temple had intimated his intention, Daisy looked up in his face with her brightest smile, she was so glad. No matter what was said about him, no matter what he was, in that supreme moment.

"If it will not trouble you," she said sweetly.

"Trouble in this case would be that of pleasing myself," he returned gallantly.

"Were you awfully bored?" she asked, trying to look up in his dark face, and failing even to raise her eyes.

"Bored,—oh, no. I seldom allow myself to get bored. I thought out two short articles for the *Review*, after you stopped singing. What a pretty, curious little body that Mrs. St. Albert is! I have met her husband in the city."

"She is the dearest, the sweetest, the most comical and peculiar, of all our Fairstock friends," Daisy said. "We think her original, almost a genius in her way. The sun is not brighter than she, and she shines equally in clear or cloudy weather. If one is moody, or blue, her very presence cheers and exhilarates."

"Isn't she — rather — somewhat — loud?" he asked, searching for a word.

"Loud! do you mean her voice, or her manner? A stranger might think so, for when she laughs, so clear and musical her tones are, that they can

be heard a great ways. I think her lovely with all her little peculiarities ; ” and, at that moment, tripped by a hidden stone, Daisy came near falling.

“ How thoughtless of me ! I should have offered you my arm , ” he said, placing her right arm carefully within his own. “ There, that is better . ”

Daisy thrilled with both fear and pleasure, and felt a mild disgust at herself for having stumbled. He had actually caught her and held her for one brief second. At the rectory gate he bade her a grave good-night, lifted his hat, and disappeared in the darkness. It did not occur to Daisy as strange, till afterward, that Margy stood on the door-sill, with a lamp, anxiously looking out, her head and face still tied up in a big handkerchief.

“ He went and he came, didn’t he ? ” she asked with a grim smile.

“ Who ? Oh, you mean Mr. Temple. Yes, but what in the world were you on the lookout for ? and have you neuralgia still ? ”

“ I — was looking for something — that — Zue lost , ” said the woman, in a smothered voice ; “ and I’m always having neuralgia, off and on . ”

Daisy peeped into the study. The fire burned low. Her brother sat in his wide easy-chair smoking and reading.

“ Still at that book ? ” asked Daisy.

“ Still at that book , ” he answered.

"Don't you get tired? It tired me awfully."

"No, for you see I'm reading with running comments which I pencil down. It's a mild stimulant, the same as this cigar is a mild sedative. The two go together very well. Temple went home early, I suppose," he added, taking the cigar from between his lips.

"No; he went to rehearsal with me."

"Ah!" the word was mildly emphasized. "Well, I hope you gave him something worth going for. Rehearsals are such stupid things."

"I sang two solos."

She stood in the firelight, the prettiest picture imaginable, with her soft dove's eyes and her rich color. "Mr. Temple very kindly saw me home," she added, in a low voice.

"Ah! of course. Temple is a perfect gentleman, a fine scholar, and a true friend."

"I'm glad to hear you say that," Daisy said in the calmest voice, though her heart beat furiously. "I heard some very unkind comments on him, to-night."

"By whom, pray?" He had resumed smoking, and his eyes travelled to the pages of his book again.

"One of the girls in the choir. Arthur, *is* he an atheist?" she asked, moving a little closer to him

"An atheist!" he looked up in indignant surprise; "nothing like it. He has the fewest faults and the most virtues of any man I know. Why won't people mind their own business!"

"Rose Dimmock said he wrote terrible things," she went on, leaning her hand on the back of his chair.

"Nonsense! what does she know about it? He has a wonderful mind. There are certain things on which we don't agree, but he is a good man for all that. You youngsters know nothing of the vagaries of a strong man's mind. I'm not a bit afraid for Temple. He will come out all right. Such men make the sturdiest Christians when they do come round. I wish he would fall in love with some good woman. She would set him right."

She was shining now from eyes to lips. Bending over, all of a tremble of doubt and delight, she kissed him. The action, or something about it, seemed to take him by surprise. He followed her pretty figure to the door with his eyes. Then he looked at the fire intently, fighting with some conviction that had just seized him.

"Pshaw!" he muttered, turning to his book.
"He is seventeen years older!"

CHAPTER VI.

MARGY WRITES.

HE went with her and he came back with her. I thought so, though I didn't see them go. I should like to know the precise location of that power that sets things to work again after we have buried our past and begun a new life. I should like to know why some poor humans are to be persecuted and shaken up when they've settled down to right lives and good resolutions, and shut out memories here and there, and closed the door to old temptations and new ones too. It don't seem right to me.

At this present moment I am in wonderful command of myself, but how is it going to end? I can't tell anybody, and that is why I must write it all out. It would set me crazy, perhaps, if I couldn't do that; for once in a while the old wicked passion springs up, and I could kill him. Poor as I am, and trying hard to save money for Zue's education, I'd give the little all I've got in the bank, if that man had never set foot in this

rectory. The first time I saw him, he didn't see me, and I ran and hid myself, crying out, "Lord God, where did he come from?" It sent the blood rushing to my head, and for the first few minutes I didn't know what I was doing. Coming to myself, Zue stood holding my gown and crying. I could have struck her, she looked so much like *him*. Then my senses came back to me, and I sat down and gathered my thoughts together, wondering what was to be done. Can I be mistaken? No, I can't. What shall I do? Leave this place? No, I couldn't go away. It would be like death for me to leave these people who love and trust me so. No other place under heaven would seem like home to me. I'm rooted here like a plant that strikes a thousand fibres into the ground and dies if one of them is broken. Mrs. Prince is a saint upon earth. There never was such a woman before, and I always think of that wonderful namesake when I see her with her babies in her arms. How I love her no one will ever know till I get to that place where all our thoughts are seen in our very breasts, as if through glass.

He, Mr. Prince, is to me, also, the image of Him whose servant he is. Where should I have been now, but for him, let me ask? A rotting corpse and an evil soul, with the ghost of a little child without chances or opportunities, in my arms,

seeking rest and finding none. Evil was in my heart, and it's all of him that I'm a living, thinking woman. It was all through that other that I lost sight of home, duty, every sense of right, almost. Even now a mighty longing for revenge rises up in my heart at sight of his eyes. I can't look at him or I'm bewitched. It's love and hate fighting together, two flames hot from an evil nature ; and one of them must win, even if I fight hard and pray all the time.

Then there's Zue ; let me look at her. She lies in my bed, her hair almost covering the pillow. Good Lord ! can't they see who she looks like ? Poor child ! she has to bear all the marks of her mother's suffering,—a hateful temper, a nervous shrinking from others, moods, strange wild spirits, and then, again, such despondency that I must watch lest she destroy herself. And all this with a craving for knowledge, genius in every direction, passionate outbursts of love, and I to see it daily, and know the reason why ! Pretty, too, poor soul. Sometimes I wish she were ugly. I think I should pity and love her more, for now in her paroxysms of rage all the father shows in her face, and that enrages me. If it wasn't for her love for Miss Daisy, who is as much like the angels in heaven as her brother and sister are, I should give up in despair. Thank God, there is somebody who can

bring the child to reason, and shame her into good behavior!

Miss Daisy is the sweetest flower in the flock; but, oh, heaven! there is a change in her. The first time he came, and the second, she met him. Then, to-day, he stopped to tea. He is gaining ground; he is winning her with those deadly, coaxing eyes. I don't know whether he tries or not, but I believe he does.

He is changed now: he has made a great name, while I have been working as a servant. He has sown his wild oats, but at what a cost! The Lord have mercy upon him, for some day I shall speak! If I could only do it now!

The rector likes him. They have great good times together. What can I say? What can I do? No, I will not speak, if I die. And yet, Miss Daisy! Well, if he has sown his wild oats, if he has come out strong and great, and become famous, if, in a word, he has changed from bad to good — but — oh, heaven! when I think of the child lying there!

It was only a few days ago that Daisy spoke to me of him. I don't know what brought it up. Perhaps it was something I said.

"I notice that you never send him about his business as you do the rest when my brother is at work," she said.

I didn't tell her then how I kept watch that I might not see him, always sending Zue to the door to let him in.

"Do you think him very handsome?" I asked.

"Yes, I do. He has a strong face, yet gentle," she said. "I never saw a handsomer man. What do *you* think?" I noticed she didn't look at me as she spoke. Why shouldn't she?

"Well, candidly, Miss Daisy," I said, in a voice that hid my real feelings, "I don't like him."

"You don't!" and now she looked up, her sweet eyes searching my face. "You must look at him again. My brother likes him, and thinks him a wonderful man, intellectually. Almost everybody thinks him handsome: why, where are your eyes, Margy?"

"I'm only a servant, miss," I said, striving to speak calmly, while my brain was whirling.

"You know we don't look upon you as only a servant, Margy," said Daisy. "You are our friend, and oftentimes our comforter."

Then my child must put in her little oar, for she spoke up,—

"Miss Daisy, he's a beautiful gentleman; but my mother hates people, sometimes. Yes, she does, for she hates me, and"—

"That's when you're wicked," I says. "And it don't matter what I think, for I *am* a servant.

And, as for Zue, she must never forget her position. Friend I may be, and am; but still, here in the kitchen is my place and duty, and hers too. If I can give her a good education, when she learns to conquer her vile temper, I hope she will lift us both; but we shall never be the worse for having had to work for our living."

Daisy—Miss Daisy, I should say—looked at me. She saw a something in my manner more than in my words. What she didn't see was the warning of different feelings in my bosom which I must keep forever shut from her eyes. So to-night I watched her at the table. I noticed when she looked at him her color came and her eyes fell. And he looked back as if—oh, Lord! I can't write it.

And then Zue, when I was undressing that night, must turn upon me like a little wild-cat.

"Where are my cousins, my Margy?" — for so she often calls me. "Where are my uncles and aunts, such as Miss Daisy talks of? She's got a grandmother. Who is my grandmother? And if my papa is dead, where is he buried? Why don't you take me to his grave, so I can see? And where are our folks, our own folks?"

That, coupled with my own thoughts, raised in me the wicked temper that has been the bane of my life. I felt it coming hot and heavy, and

began to shake little Zue. Then I stopped short, and had it out with myself, instead. I shut the blinds, slamming them. I shut the window with all the force I could, and gave the bedstead a wrench that ought to have broken it.

“Say, my Margy, say,” cried the child persistently.

“I can’t say,” I cried, not daring to touch her for fear of what I might do. “Your grandmother is dead, and so I suppose is your grandfather. You haven’t any cousins. I was an only child. As for uncles and aunts, there may be a few of them alive, but they don’t care for you or me, and if you want to find your father’s grave, you must go down, down, into the bowels of the sea, where he lies drowned and dead.”

The sea is my poor soul, where he has lain drowned and dead — till now. God forgive me for the lie I told her.

CHAPTER VII.

MARGY WRITES.

STOP! Suppose, to calm myself, I write down the whole story.

When I was a child, I lived in a country town, the prettiest place in the world, I think, even as I look back upon it now. I see the low-roofed parsonage, so peaceful, so picturesque, at the foot of a green hill that stretched so far away. It always seemed to me as if the end of the world was beyond it, and it would not take long to reach it. I must have been a strange, restless child, for I was always longing to travel, to get beyond things, to go behind the sun as I expressed it. I wearied everybody with my questions as to the outside world.

Our house was old, but cosey and comfortable. Don't I remember the little sitting-room where my mother sat, pale and beautiful, and, as I know now, suffering? The perfect autumn days come back to me, with the scent of the wild-flowers by the wayside, as I walked to school or went to church.

My constant playmate was Inez Burns. The child suited me. On her mother's side she was Spanish, Scotch on her father's, a wild and daring spirit, not, perhaps, the best companion for an excitable girl like me. She had always been left to her own way and devices, but she was honest as the day.

At home I was penned in, secluded, doomed at times to strict silence. If my mother was worse than usual, I must make no noise. If my father was in his study, all exciting plays were forbidden. Home, to me, was a place of restraint. My father, a gloomy man, seldom smiled, and scarcely noticed me, unless by some remarkable freak of memory I had learned more Bible verses than usual. I liked the old ivy-covered church. Gray and sombre outside, it was exceedingly cheerful within. There I was always made much of as the minister's daughter. Everybody petted me. In the estimation of the plain country people, I could do no wrong. They praised my eyes, my hair, my complexion. I was at eleven as vain and coquettish as most girls are at eighteen. At home there was but scant praise for me. I loved my mother, loved to anticipate her wishes, to talk, to read to her, to comb and curl her soft, pretty hair; and when she was well, home was endurable. My father, I feared. He was naturally austere, suffered greatly from dyspepsia, and expected too

much of me. Inez Burns was my solace, my comforter, my idol. Like myself, she had a fondness for forbidden pleasures. She and I wrote plays in secret. Oh, the delicious remembrance of those stolen delights! The old baize doors of the church witnessed our entrances and exits. Together we would get up costumes at home; and, as the sexton was very old and indulgent to me, it was never difficult to obtain the church-keys.

So passed the days till my mother died, when I was sixteen. The horror, the black despair of that time, the insane longing to die and lie beside her, all come back to me now, with a rush of recollection that forces the hot tears to my eyes. Why, oh, my God! did I not die then? If I had only gone with her! After that, home was like a tomb. I went where I listed, for my father buried himself more and more in his books. If he had only turned to me for consolation, but he never did. Instead, he sent me to a distant school; and about that time, to my great delight, Inez Burns moved into the city. It did not take much to prevail upon her mother to send her to school with me. I was without guardianship. Inez might as well have been, for all the care her mother exercised over her.

Sometimes we were allowed to go to concerts, sometimes to the theatres. I was infatuated with

the stage, so was Inez. One day we read of a celebrated opera troupe on its way to the Far West. A dozen girls were advertised for to make up a deficiency in the chorus corps. Inez and I were wild over the matter.

"Just for fun," she said, "let's answer it — or better yet, suppose we go in person. Of course they may not want us, but I flatter myself they will. Won't it be splendid to travel? I'm so tired of this commonplace life. We can both read music fairly well, and I know they can find no fault with our faces."

It took but little argument to conquer what little prejudice I felt concerning the matter. I did not like school, equally I disliked my home. For one moment my father's proud, slight figure came up before me — his stern face with its piercing eyes, and then I thought, "What does he care for me?" I knew he would never forgive such an escapade, and I felt abundantly able and more than willing to take care of myself.

So we went to the manager's den. The great man was there. He asked a few questions, was evidently pleased with our appearance, with the strikingly beautiful eyes of my companion, with my face and figure, and engaged us on the spot.

Three o'clock, and the house as silent as the grave. I must write no more to-night. When it

will please Heaven to give me another opportunity,—and that is only another way of saying when I am in the mood for writing,—I cannot tell, but I will try again, soon. Already I feel the pressure of that terrible weight on my brain less heavy.

But God help and save Miss Daisy !

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE ORGAN-LOFT.—“WHY CANNOT I LET
THAT GIRL ALONE?”

“BUT what is law? You will answer, It is an orderly procedure. Its character does not vary. The fact itself precedes the science of the fact. Can faith precede any knowledge of the thing which it embraces? No: you presume, you accept blindly, you are visionaries. You believe in a thing of whose reality you know nothing.”

It was Temple who spoke.

“You believe in nothing, then, but what you can see, taste, and smell?” said the rector.

“Oh, yes; I believe in everything, but after my own fashion,” laughed Temple.

At that moment Daisy passed. By the hand she held Zue, who was smiling and chatting good-humoredly.

“That’s a strange child,” the rector said. “What do you think I found her doing yesterday?”

“I’m sure I can’t imagine,” was the reply.

“Reading Robert Elsmere, perched on the arm of my study-chair.”

"Rather advanced literary tastes," said Temple.

"Absorbed in it—and I've no doubt she will read it through. Another day I found this sketch, copied from my old-fashioned Bible, 'Death on the Pale Horse.' It is drawn on a sheet of my sermon-paper. What do you think of it?"

"There is a hint of genius in every line," said Temple. "The child's talent should be cultivated."

"Yes, it should be; but the creature is such a freak! One day she is dull, stupid, and, if I may say it, possessed of the devil, a sullen devil too. Another, so bright and spirited and magnetic, that everybody is delighted with her. I don't understand her. I gave up trying, long ago."

Daisy looked up at that moment, and smiled and nodded. The child gave a grotesque imitation of smile and nod, and kissed her hand.

"The mother is in your service," said Temple musingly, his eyes following Daisy's retreating figure.

"Yes; and a superior woman. Zue inherits genius from some dead and gone ancestor. With one stroke of her pencil, as you see, she delineates both strength and grace. She is passionately fond of music, and will sometimes talk poetry in her wild, visionary moments by the hour. A very singular organization on the whole, sensitive,

proud, passionate, losing at times all control of herself, in her paroxysms of temper. Daisy is the only person who can control her when she has, what her mother calls, her spasms."

"And you say her mother is a superior woman," said Temple.

"Yes, somewhat cultured and a splendid house-keeper," was the answer. "I have never inquired very particularly into her antecedents. She was married very young, and I judge not happily. On all pertaining to her past she is singularly reticent. Her loss would be irreparable."

"There is something peculiar about the child's face," said Temple; "she both attracts and repels me. Curious, she seems to resemble somebody I know, but when I search for the likeness I lose it again. But I must go,—I have letters to write," he added, rising. "I was passing, and the house looked so cosey, nestling in its vines in the sunlight, that I felt impelled to come in."

"That's right. You can never come too often," said the rector heartily. "You're never in the way, you know."

"Thank you. I am nearer heaven here than in any other place," was the smiling answer, and the man went out in somewhat needless haste. The truth was, he wanted to overtake Daisy. The flutter of her graceful dress could be seen

at the distant corner she was at that moment turning.

"Making for the church," he said to himself, and hurried a little.

At that moment who should come up but Rush Severn, so near that he touched Temple in passing. The young fellow had a roll of music under his arm, and seemed in a hurry. Temple caught one flash of his handsome eyes; the bright, curling hair was stirred by the wind, against the brim of his broad hat; the lithe young figure bounded along. The very sight of so much youth, strength, symmetry, stayed the steps of the older man.

"He is probably going to give her a lesson," he said to himself. "What a fool I am! Why cannot I let that girl alone? The boy loves her,—one of the kind that wears his heart on his sleeve,—and they are suited in age, temperament, tastes. He is better fitted for her than I am, who am almost twice her age. Let me go on my way, as I long ago decided to do—and fling thoughts of love to the winds."

Meantime Daisy, knowing nothing of her following, went to the little old cottage where the old sexton lived, took down the keys, as was her privilege, and from there walked on to the church, where the organ-blower had preceded her. Nothing in the world was a greater treat to Zue than

to be allowed to sit in the organ-loft while Daisy manipulated the old yellowed keys of the organ. Daisy was practising secretly, in order to surprise her brother, who played the organ himself with a power and delicacy which could only be the outcome of genius, since he knew nothing about music, and his improvisations were so startling in beauty and originality, that they won praise from life-long students of that noble instrument.

She had been practising for some time when an unusual movement on Zue's part startled her, and, turning, she saw Rush Severn looking up from one of the singer's seats.

The color flew all over her face.

"How did you get here when I locked myself in?" she asked, in a voice as severe in its modulations as she could make it.

"The sexton came in by the study-door," he humbly answered; "and I came in with him. Pray forgive me. I heard the organ, and thought it was the rector. He never minds, so I came. But, upon my word, you surprise me. Who taught you to play so well? How long have you been practising?"

Daisy jumped agilely from her high perch, evidently much relieved when she stood upon *terra firma*, though her cheeks were still red, and her manner disconcerted.

"I only play now and then. I remember what I hear; and I have watched you, at times." She was surprised into a blush by the flash of light that illumined his face.

"That is the greatest compliment I ever received in my life," he said.

She moved back uneasily, dismayed by the fervor of his speech, and provoked by the curtailment of her practice. Having given herself two hours, it was rather annoying to be deprived of a full hour, for now she could not think of remaining any longer.

"Any enthusiast in music might do the same thing," she said. "I love the organ, it has a soul in every note—and I should like to play it well."

"Then you shall," he answered, his dark eyes sparkling. "I should be delighted to teach so apt a pupil, just for the pleasure of it. Any day you say, I can give you one hour, two hours." He looked eagerly in her eyes, his face all aglow.

"I couldn't possibly think of it," she said. "I have really more to do than I ought with my vocal and piano lessons. No, it will be all I can do to come now and then in the old church and practise. Oh, I never expect to become a proficient on the organ. But I can please myself."

She had quite regained her usual quiet manner, and forgotten to be vexed at his presence as she

stood tying the strings of her hat, while the child at her side followed her example.

"It would be a great delight to have a pupil to whom this kind of work is not the drudgery it is to some. Don't go just now. Please me by listening to a little trifle I composed yesterday. What it is worth to others I don't know, but it pleases me."

"It is very beautiful," she said frankly, as indeed it was. "You should put words to it."

"So I think," he said, his face brighter as he turned and looked down upon her from the high organ-seat. "I am going to ask the rector to compose some. He writes such rare poetry, and is so very kind! Must you really go?"

"Yes, I must," Daisy said, moving off in earnest. Zue followed her, but turned back to look once again at the professor, whose music and face both charmed her.

"Are you going to Mrs. St. Albert's party?" Rush Severn asked. He had swung himself from his seat and gone after them.

"Oh, yes, of course I am going there," Daisy said, drawing on her glove. "It is the one great event of the year in this town."

"Then I shall see you there."

Daisy nodded and ran down-stairs, followed closely by Zue and Rush Severn. She liked the

man. He was pleasant to know, but what girl cannot discern the tokens of worship under the guise of apparent friendship? Daisy did not say to herself that Rush Severn loved her: she only said of herself, that she could never love him.

CHAPTER IX.

"I WISH IT HAD BEEN MY SHROUD."

ONE day in the following week, Zue had been perverse and hateful since the early morning, and now it was nearly twilight. It began with Mr. Temple's call.

"There's that man coming. He has opened the gate and is stopping there," her mother said, pausing in her work and turning to the child.

"No, *you* must go this time," said the girl, standing quite still. "You send me every time he comes. I am getting tired of it."

"Zue, if you don't go!" her mother said threateningly, setting her iron down. "Do you see how busy I am?"

"You send me when you're *not* busy," said the child sullenly. "You never will go."

"Are you going, Zue?" and her mother gave her a terrible glance.

"No," said Zue firmly, putting her hands behind her. "I hate him."

"All right. He is Miss Daisy's friend. She

lov — likes him. I'll tell her you hate her friend."

"No!" the girl started and ran to the door as fast as her feet could carry her. Another moment she came back and threw herself on the floor in a fit of the sulks, till Daisy came singing along the passage.

Margy looked up as Daisy entered the kitchen, asking for something for the twins. The woman took from the clothes-horse some things white as snow-drifts with the sun shining on them, and laid them upon Daisy's arm, still looking in her face.

"No," she said to herself, "she don't know he's here."

"I'm going to the organ-loft, Zue," said Daisy. Zue was all attention now. Her great eyes glowed. The blue veins on her temples stood out.

"There are millions of voices, millions there, ain't there, Miss Daisy?" she said slowly as if speaking to herself. "The children sing, and the men and women, and then come in all the full bands."

"You shall go with me, Zue, if you have been good," Daisy said, with her sweet smile. "Put your hat on if you have had your breakfast, and come."

"She hasn't eaten a mouthful this morning," her mother said.

"I'll eat something now," and the child flew to the cracker-box and began cramming down some crackers. "There, now I can go," she said with her mouth full. "I like to dream while you are playing. I build a glass house in the middle of green woods, and then I listen to what the birds and flowers are saying, for you know they do talk," and she looked up in such an elfish way that Daisy was startled.

"You mustn't have such queer fancies," her mother said, as she pulled a stiff piece of linen out ready for the ironing.

"Who's going to hinder?" asked Zue, with a mocking laugh. "Can't I fancy that my father is alive, and I have lots of aunts and uncles and cousins? Can't I fancy that I am rich enough to give away plenty of money, and that I have all the musical instruments I want, besides thousands of other nice things that would fill a universe?"

"Where in the world did she get that word!" her mother mused over her work. "She's a strange child, Miss Daisy," she added; "I don't know what she's going to make."

"A good woman, I hope," said Daisy, and carried her off.

Zue stopped on the threshold.

"Did you know Mr. Temple was here?" she asked.

"No," said Daisy, laughing and blushing.

"Don't you want to see him before you go to the church?" the child persisted.

"Hush, you silly child; why should I?" interrogated Daisy.

"Because mother said you liked him," was Zue's answer. Then a door shut; and Daisy, whose cheeks were like red roses, caught Zue's hands, and ran down the path to the gate.

"Zue," she said, when they were well out of the house, "I think you are an impertinent little monkey."

"Hadn't you just as lief I'd be a kitten?" queried the imperturbable Zue. "I never did like monkeys. They're nasty things."

"You *are* a monkey if you meddle. Little girls should never meddle with things they don't know anything about."

"I don't know how to meddle," said Zue; "but I'm tired of letting Mr. Temple in. It don't matter whether mother is busy or not, she always sends me. I'm perfectly *sure*," she added, looking up in Daisy's face with the queer, elfish expression she sometimes assumed, "that mother hates him to his boots."

"Why in the world should she?" Daisy ex-

claimed, and then was provoked with her own eagerness.

"Mother thinks I'm hard to understand," said Zue wisely; "but she's a great deal harder. She never will tell me about my father; and, do you know, I begin to think I never had one. I wouldn't give a thank-you for a mother. *I want a father.*"

"You talk too much, Zue," said Daisy, secretly amused.

It wanted two hours to dinner when Daisy returned.

"Will he be here yet?" she questioned of herself, and then, "suppose he is, why should I care?" She entered the hall: the study-door was shut, sure indication that nobody was there. Then she went into the study. It was empty. She knew where Temple had sat, for the book he had been reading still lay upon the window-seat. With a conscious look she sat down in the chair, smiling and blushing. Everything was in order, even to the papers on the desk, for the rector was rigidly methodical. The book-shelves were spotless, the hearth shone like glass, and the pretty carpet had been lately swept. Margy had been at work.

"Why should Margy hate him? I don't believe she hates him," murmured Daisy, her hand on the book he had been reading. Then she tried to

fancy what she should do or say if he should come in suddenly, and then fearing that perhaps he would, she ran up-stairs into her own room. She drew off her gloves, put her hat away, and paused a moment before the mirror. What she saw there was a thoughtful, inscrutable face, which would not acknowledge its own charms.

"It's only young and girlish. There's nothing beautiful about it, except, perhaps, the color," she added hurriedly. "Even Mary says I have a lovely complexion. But what of it? Would a man like that think of me for a moment? Rush Severn might. I've known Rush Severn two years — and I've only known *him* two months! Oh! I'm ashamed of myself for thinking of him, and he never wastes a thought on me. But he is so noble! so grand! so thoroughly manly! *I will* stop thinking of him," she said with decision. "I should despise myself if — if — I loved a man who looks upon me as a child. Arthur would despise me if he knew — oh, I *must* stop thinking! What to wear at Mrs. St. Albert's party. I must set my wits at work."

She opened a closet-door. Several dresses hung inside, — soft blues, and pinks, and grays, that underwent, one by one, her careful scrutiny.

"That can never be mended, the sleeves are gone at the elbows. This is too short, for I do believe I am still growing."

So she went through the list, and came away concluding that, like the famous heroine of Madison Square, she had nothing to wear.

"Nothing that will look presentable at a party, at least," she added in a melancholy undertone. Then she went into the adjoining room, which was the nursery. Mary was just inducting the twins into their afternoon dresses, and declared that they looked like little cherubs from heaven, after she had patted and pulled and tied them to her heart's content. Nothing could be more beautiful when at last she put them on the white bed, where they began to crow in the most dulcet tones, to belabor each other with white arms and hands, and altogether to do such bewildering things, and to laugh with such hearty good nature, that Mary could not tear herself away from them.

"I don't care what anybody says, they are two charming little aristocrats! Look how daintily they touch things!" cried the delighted mother. "O Daisy! I'm losing my heart to them more and more every day. I never saw such babies. They laugh when they waken, and they do nothing but keep good-natured, and are as graceful and beautiful as angels. They are the dearest, sweetest, darlingest"—and down she fell, worshipping, her head buried between the two crowing little figures, at which they only laughed

the louder, and turned their vigorous little fists on her.

Daisy enjoyed it, but presently was so still that the rector's wife turned towards her.

"What in the world are you thinking of, Daisy?" she asked. "You look as grave, if not as wise, as an owl."

Daisy's anxious brows, the veiled eyes, the droop of the pretty lips, made her seem serious, if not dejected. She brightened, however, and a shade of color touched her cheeks.

"I suppose you wouldn't call it thinking very seriously, but I was wondering what I shall wear to Mrs. St. Albert's next Thursday," was her answer.

"Won't your white mull do?"

"Oh, dear, no!" said Daisy; "it hasn't a bit of style, and is too short. Of course I can't get a new one; that is out of the question."

"Perhaps I can help you," said Mary. "I'm sure there are lots of ribbons and laces — and things. Why, of course I can! Why didn't I think of it before? My wedding-dress!"

The two women looked at each other, all eyes.

"To be sure, it's almost ten years old, but it is one of those things that never go out of fashion. There it lies in the trunk, doing no good whatever to me or any one else. Here," and she

detached a chain of keys from her chatelaine, and handed it to Daisy. "It is in that big trunk in the hall-closet, in the tray, done up in blue paper. Bring it here, and we'll see."

Daisy was in a flutter of delight. She knew that the dress was very choice and beautiful, and presently it was brought in and laid upon the bed.

"My enthusiasm may be the result of an ardent idealism," Mary went on, as she unfolded the paper, "but I remember several of my friends thought it an imported costume."

"Oh! it is just lovely!" cried Daisy, breathless, as the dress came to light.

"Yes, it certainly is uncommonly pretty, and I'll tell you why. All this filmy lace—you see it is exquisite—was given me by Aunt Esther. It is an heirloom. There were yards and yards, and I had it all made into trimming. I believe it has done duty for more than one wedding. Except that Arthur dislikes short sleeves, the dress is perfect. But there are gloves to go with it, and they are quite long. Oh, yes, it will be just the thing for a party-dress. I'm so anxious to see you in it."

Daisy was soon inducted into the gown, and it was found to fit her perfectly.

"A ribbon here, a flower there; and it is a superb fit too; not a seam to be taken in, not a

stitch to take out. I'm so glad! Dear little wedding-dress!"

She patted and pulled it here and there, and stood admiring, her head on one side.

" You are sure you don't care," Daisy said.

" For what?"

" My wearing it. Some people are so superstitious about these things."

" Well, I'm not one of the some," laughed the rector's wife. " I like to have things doing good, and I'm so glad I thought of it! It's not a bit yellow, either, owing to the wax candles I put round it, and the blue paper. Blue paper is so nice for white goods. There, now you are provided for, don't be anxious any more."

For answer Daisy bent over and kissed her.

" I'm sure to be happy in it," she said with much feeling.

" It was over a happy heart when I wore it, dear," said her sister-in-law.

" And you have never had it on since your wedding?"

" Never. At first I had the sentimental ideas that most young wives have, that it should be kept sacred forever; and I cuddled it away, thinking I would let it lie there till it should be needed for my shroud. I have got all over that, though, and laughed at the silly notion many a time."

"And why haven't you worn it, dear?" asked Daisy, lifting the marvel of lace and muslin over her head.

"Oh! it seemed too childish for one in my matronly position," she said. "I had other nice dresses, more suitable to my age and standing," she added with a light laugh.

"Your age! You look hardly a bit older than I do," said Daisy, kissing her again. "Then I may take this into my room."

"To be sure you may. Go down and ask Margy to iron those ribbons out; they are creased. Nothing else need be touched."

Daisy went trippingly down the stairs, humming as she went. There was also the delightful possibility that Mr. Temple might be closeted with her brother; and though she was not vain enough to think it might be a pleasure to him to know her whereabouts, she could not help sounding a little advance note to indicate that she was in the house.

"But would he care?" she thought, checking herself of a sudden. "I don't suppose he ever thinks of me," she soliloquized; "but I—do—think of his eyes," she added plaintively. It was very still, everywhere. Margy was ironing. Zue was asleep, or pretended to be, on the kitchen lounge.

"Please iron these ribbons out," said Daisy; "it's too bad, too, just as you've begun on a shirt."

"Oh, that's nothing. I was just going to change the irons anyway;" and Margy, suiting the action to the word, placed a fresh iron to cool a little, and took the dress.

"My sakes! isn't that pretty?" she exclaimed, holding it at arm's-length. "Mrs. Prince's wedding-dress."

"How did you know?" Daisy asked.

"She let me look at it once; that was before the twins were born. It was a time when she was pretty low-spirited. She wanted me to have it put on her if she should die, you know."

Daisy shuddered.

"So she is going to wear it again, as I told her. Says I, 'You will live to wear it a good many times.'"

"Not she, but I," said Daisy.

"No! Did you know that is considered bad luck? Your chances for marrying this year will be gone."

"Well, that don't trouble me," said Daisy. "I don't want to be married this year, nor for many a year to come."

"Oh! you don't," Margy responded, and looked at her with a side-long glance, her lips, curving

into a half smile. All the impulses of her impetuous character had been tamed by long repression, yet there was that on her lips, which, spoken, would have scared the girl before her.

"It's a party, I suppose," she said, breaking the silence again.

"Yes; at Mrs. St. Albert's. She gives such delightful parties!" said Daisy.

"She's such a queer little woman!" said Margy reflectively, smoothing out another ribbon. "I never know whether she is in jest or in earnest. Who are you going with?" she asked without looking up.

"Why, my brother, of course, and his wife," said Daisy. "Who did you think?"

"I—didn't know," was the answer, as she tried another iron by holding it close to her cheek. "All the town will be there, I suppose."

"Yes, everybody who is usually there," Daisy said, taking the dress which Margy held towards her. "And I'm sure my dress will be pretty—thank you, Margy."

"Yes, but I'd rather it had been new. I'm mighty superstitious about these things, wedding finery and the like."

"Were you married in white?" asked Daisy, all aflush. She had never spoken to her before of her past.

"Did—I—marry in white? No, dead black, *dead* black. And I wish it had been my shroud."

"O Margy!" Daisy exclaimed with frightened eyes. The woman could say whole volumes in a sentence; eyes, voice, and manner all united in stamping her words with an expression that haunted one.

"Don't ask about it, child," said Margy, with a wild look. "I might be tempted to say that I'd wish I hadn't. I couldn't begin to tell you the misery that came into my life after that. I—I died then," she gasped, and held up a long white robe before her eyes as if examining the texture. It was in reality to hide the distortion of her features. Daisy asked no more questions, but hurried out of the room and up-stairs, where she spread the dress out upon the bed that she might feast her eyes upon it.

But she never forgot that expression on Margy's face.

"Something terrible must have happened, poor thing!" she said pityingly; "her marriage must have been unhappy."

CHAPTER X.

MARGY WRITES.

IT is night again, and the house is still. *He* has not been here since this morning. Let me try again to write the hapless story of my life. I left off at the den of the manager, who hired us both, Inez and me, to sing in the chorus. The prospect held a certain charm for me as for Inez,—the novelty of travel, the pleasure of seeing new faces. We should see the world! The very idea of appearing before large and brilliant throngs, the fashion and beauty of the cities, captivated us both. Suppose I remained at school. There was no mother to greet me, either in the holidays or when I had finished my education. My father, grim, silent, solitary, with never a glance or word of love for me — how could I endure the thought of going back? Home was no longer home to me. My father had made my mother's life intolerable, he should not imbitter mine. Inez's mother had married again, and the girl hated her step-father. She needed no persuasion to go, and we joined the troupe.

I can conscientiously say, that, for a time, I was happy. Forgetting the past, I lived in the present. Inez and I were all in all to each other. We shared the same room, ate at the same table, slept in the same bed. Life was very brilliant to the two undisciplined girls who knew of nothing brighter. Night after night we appeared before great crowds, as queens, shepherdesses, soldiers, peasants, gypsies, everything by turn, and nothing long. Our duties were not hard. We journeyed from city to city, were well paid, and life went easily.

At last we stopped in the great city of—I will not name it. There for weeks and months we participated in all the delights of crowded houses, and a success that was unparalleled. Now came the romance for which I had been longing.

Night after night there appeared in one of the front rows near the orchestra, a young man who seemed to level his opera-glass at myself, so constantly, indeed, that I began to look for it, and Inez to joke me about my unknown admirer before we went on the stage. It was all new to me, for we had been so constantly on the move before, that we had had no chance for admirers. The young man, however, was persistent, and finally sent me flowers with his card. It pleased me, it was all so novel and beautiful. I fancied that Inez

was hurt or jealous, because of this new element in my life; and that added zest to the interest with which I regarded him.

Then I did what I shall regret all my life long. I met him clandestinely, and listened to his passionate love-speeches. He laid a spell upon me, and I became restless and unhappy when I could not see him. I shall never forget — one week in particular, when he was called away on business, as he told me. Then I knew what he had become to me. When I met him again, I longed to keep him. I loved him so that I was frightened at myself. I could scarcely give my attention to the business that compelled me to my duties night after night. I grew absent-minded and restless. At last, in one of these moods of passion and unrest, I yielded to his entreaties, and we were secretly married.

I had never confided in Inez, who was all the time trying to persuade me to give him up.

“He is wild and reckless,” she would say. “I can see it in his eyes. Handsome, yes, but not of the kind that make good husbands, especially when they take their wives from the stage. Let him talk; it’s all comedy now; but for Heaven’s sake don’t turn it into tragedy by believing him. We are so happy together; send him about his business. Wait, and who knows where our ambition

and the manager's kindness may carry us! We are not like the other girls, and have already taken leading parts."

But I loved him, alas! I loved him! While she talked, I was already in a trance of delirious happiness, thinking of him.

At last came the time of the removal of the company to a distant city, and I — stayed behind. I was Mrs. Temple now! How beautiful seemed that name to me then! I thought of it when Miss Daisy asked me if it was not a beautiful name, but, ah! how I hate and loathe it now! And he so handsome, frank, and loving, and so free with his money! What he promised! I lived in paradise for one brief year. What my husband's business was, I never knew. Now I do. He was a gambler. Strange men often came to see us, and always they played cards. He dressed me well. I had jewels, fine diamonds, handsome apartments, when he was in funds. Oh! how happy I was that year! Another came, and my husband lost his friends. His companions were of a lower grade. We moved frequently. Then he began to drink, and when intoxicated he was always abusive. Six months before my poor Zue was born, he deliberately abandoned me, at a time when I needed his love more than ever, leaving me in a strange part of the city, without even one

acquaintance of my own sex. One day I received a letter from him, in which he complained of his inability to support us both.

"If I ever make money again," he said, "in the far-off land where I am going, I will remember you. If not, you will be able, I feel convinced, to support yourself as you have done heretofore." Was not that cruel? and I bound hand and foot! I dare not recall that time, even now. That cowardly letter is written in words of fire on my brain. For a time I thought I should go mad. Left alone in a great city, deserted, deceived.

My temples throb with the horror of that remembrance. If he had died, I could have gone home to my father, mourning for my husband.

Inez had been true in her friendship, and had written to me, but her letter remained unanswered. What could I write to her?

"If you are unhappy or unfortunate," she said, over and over, "let me know at once. You can come back here."

Come back! and I so helpless! How I lived, I do not know. I sold my jewels. I pawned my dresses. I managed to exist till my baby was born. "Come back!" and that helpless, wailing baby on my hands! For Zue was not a sweet baby, like the twins. She was always crying or worrying, or, it seemed to me, resenting the fact

of her birth. Well, what to do then? I sewed, I stitched shirts, and collars and cuffs — anything I could get; and the pay would hardly keep me in bread. I was forced to go down into the slums, to live where the atmosphere reeked with vice and filth. My disappointment made me fiendish. I angered my friends. I was driven to desperation more than once.

There was a young missionary living in that quarter of the city. So young, with the beauty of an angel in his blue eyes! I shocked him with my ingratitude, my despair, my unbelief. But he bore with me, thank God. When I had come to the worst, and saw nothing before me but infamy or death, I chose death. Arranging my affairs, I took my baby in my arms, and went deliberately down to the wharf. How well I remember it, and the great, black, hungry waste of water, looking so merciless. *He* had followed me — and he saved me.

O Andrew Temple, I have not forgotten you! O Andrew Temple, I shall never forget you! Coward, fiend, devil, to come here into this good family with your altered manhood, to win *him* to your friend — to win, oh, merciful Heaven! what shall I do to prevent this crime? — that pure, sweet young soul!

I must have time. I must think, think! Surely God will help me.

They say he has become a famous man ; that he has a grand mind ; that he is a lawyer, and writes for the best papers and magazines. And yet, Andrew Temple, I pronounce you false, wicked, and cruel ! And so, some day, I shall brand you, though you are powerful and I am weak.

What then ? Would I accept any reparation ? No ; not one jot. I have chosen my life. I love it. Here I am honored with the confidence of those I serve. They would make even more a friend of me if I would allow it. Here I am safe. These dear people have been good to me in my days of darkness, nursed me in sickness, cherished me in health. They shall have my life-long service. It is only for the child I mourn ; the wild, impulsive soul that he has given her.

And Daisy ! That beautiful, innocent girl, with the light of heaven in her eyes. Can it be that she is beginning to love him ? I know, I feel that she is. His eyes have the old magic yet, those coaxing eyes ! his manner, the old charm. He might not recognize me, and yet I dare not see him. I am not the slender girl I was. Sickness and sorrow have changed me. He shall never know who I am, if I can help it.

It is a hard task to set before myself, but I will accomplish it. I owe my ruined life to you, Andrew Temple ! That I shall say, if ever mercy

pleads, or tenderness for Miss Daisy blunts my sense of justice. I owe my blighted life to your wicked selfishness. I owe all the despairing moments, days, weeks, I have had, to your cruel deception. Almost you have made me a murdereress!

To see the two together! he, Mr. Prince, a prince indeed, and that man with his dark past. Does he ever think of that trusting girl who gave up all for him?

In the long silences of the night does he hear her cries of despair? When he looks at this child, this strange, wayward thing that I have nursed and loved,—ay, and at times hated,—does nothing in her face speak to him — her face so much like his?

A rush of emotion overpowered the woman as she laid aside her pen. She shook as with an ague as she sat there, shedding hot tears, her face hidden in her hands.

The small lamp placed on a bracket above the table shed its gleams on her abundant hair. Its tiny gleam wandered on, showing the outlines of a small room. Everything was scrupulously clean. A bed, in the middle of which little Zue lay, stood against the wall. The child's hair streamed over the pillow, gleaming like gold. Margy, in a

fit of despondency, had named the child Azubah, because the word meant forsaken.

Presently the woman rose, wiped her tears away with a defiant gesture, and soon the room was as silent and dark as the rest of the house.

CHAPTER XI.

AT THE PARTY.

DAISY'S mirror told her that she was beautiful on the auspicious night of Mrs. St. Albert's party. Mary came in while she was putting on the finishing touches, to see if her sister-in-law needed her help. She herself was dressed in pearl-colored silk, which sent out a shimmer of lustre every time she moved.

"Oh, how sweet she is!" she cried, "and dressed all by herself too. I've been waiting, expecting to hear you call me for ever so long. How nice it is to have a woman like Margy in the house! so faithful, so devoted! I don't half prize her, I'm afraid. She will sit by those two babies till I come home, now Zue has cried herself to sleep. A pity the child takes such fancies. Nobody could convincee her that Miss Daisy might not have taken her if she pleased. A little chit like her! I wonder her mother has so much patience with her."

"She wanted to go to take care of me," said

Daisy, laughing. "Once in a while she pretends to consider me in great danger, and I do believe the child really suffers."

"Are you well wrapped up?" her sister-in-law asked, as they were ready to go. "It is really cool to-night, and you know your chest is delicate."

"Oh, I'm both flannelled and shawled, as Mrs. St. Albert says," laughed Daisy. "I've only to get my fan. There, now I'm ready."

The St. Albert mansion was two squares away. A pair of majestic stone lions guarded its massive portals. All the windows were alight, and well-trained servants stood ready to show the visitors to the cloak-room, and usher the guests into the presence of the host and hostess.

Mrs. St. Albert was radiant. On occasions like this she kept the comical side of her character in abeyance, except with her most intimate friends, particularly if her husband was near.

The master of the house was tall, clear-eyed, clean-shaven, of a decidedly military bearing and well-favored. By those who did not know him he was called an aristocrat. He stood beside his wife like a statue in bronze, and they made a striking-looking couple, she so tiny and winsome, he quiet, smiling, and dark.

"Oh, here you are!" she said, as Daisy made her

appearance. " You are just like a picture, deary. I'm in a panic, as usual, for fear things won't go off right. I have already had one disappointment. The one fiddler in the town sent word that his wife was dying; and as there's no band within sixty miles of Fairstoek, why, we shall have to dance by the piano. I do hope you brought some music. I meant to tell you, and I utterly forgot; but you are always so kind."

The words were accentuated with one of her sweetest smiles.

" I didn't bring any music," said Daisy; " but I have some old songs that I never forget, if it will do to sing them."

" Old songs! 'there's nothing like the old songs.' There comes Mr. Sims. Do you never feel as if he was going to swallow you, when he opens his mouth? Deary, if you will have the kindness just to say a word to poor old Uncle Sam, who keeps hovering round you like an enormous bumble-bee. He thinks there's nobody like you."

Daisy turned, and smiled and nodded to a lean old man, whose clothes hung loosely about him, as he stood waiting patiently to be noticed. His face lighted almost pathetically; he took both her hands in his; his piercings eyes, accentuated by bushy black brows, kindled at sight of her smile. Uncle Sam had been as deaf as a post, as the saying

is, for twenty long years; and though he could hear reasonably well with an ear-trumpet, he used it as little as possible, and only on very private occasions.

"How do you do, Uncle Sam?" asked Daisy, oblivious of the younger fry who stood waiting for their turn.

"I'm very glad, very glad indeed to meet you here," said Uncle Sam, bowing with old-time courtesy. "Quite chilly this evening. A change in the wind, I suppose; thermometer down to fifty."

"I hope you are enjoying yourself," said Daisy, as he still held her hands, knowing that it hardly mattered what was said.

"Yes, yes, exceedingly changeable weather. I keep a record of the weather; have done so for forty years or thereabouts. Let me see; in '78, I think, we had just such weather as this, the last of August. I could tell you exactly if I could refer to my journal. I've got the weather down to a fine point; pretty good weather-prophet, I am, pretty good weather-prophet. Seems to be a little chilly here, isn't it?"

With that the old man released her hands, and she left him to tell his experience to the next newcomer, and looked about her. The rooms were rapidly filling; they were large rooms, and showed a pleasant vista, luminous with softly shaded

lights, filled with beautiful furniture, and tastefully decorated with flowers and colored lamps. Daisy knew everybody, and everybody knew her. The minister's sister was a great favorite with the people of Fairstock. She moved radiantly among groups of pretty young girls, nodding to the gentlemen, stopping occasionally to speak to the older members of the church, some of whom had taken possession of the rector and carried him off for a talk.

One of the members of the choir came across the room and met Daisy. It was Rose Dimmock, prettier than ever in a shimmering white silk costume.

"Isn't it too bad!" was her first exclamation, in a vexed tone. "And you are so exquisitely dressed!" This last phrase rather disjointed the sentence, and Daisy looked puzzled. "I never saw you look so well in my life. All the arrangements so perfect too! And it only comes once a year."

Daisy began to laugh.

"What *do* you mean?" she asked. "Isn't what too bad?" she interrogated.

"Why, Professor Severn was to play for us, you know; and he has come here to-night with his right hand in a sling, so to speak. It might as well be."

Daisy looked her disappointment.

"Yes; something or other hurt his thumb, and it's swelled and sore. He has been nursing it all day, but it's of no use. He can't play."

"And the violinist has disappointed us too," said Daisy, with a look of dismay.

"What! Oh, that is too terrible! I don't care to stay, do you? No dancing! and it is the only chance I ever get! Mamma won't let me dance anywhere else. She says one knows just who comes at Mrs. St. Albert's. And my dress is so pretty, too, made expressly for this occasion. Don't you think it's pretty?"

"Charming," said Daisy, as the girl wheeled about to show herself from all points. "But you know dancing is not to commence till ten. By that time somebody may be found who will play."

"Yes, and put us all out. I hate amateurs on such an occasion. They're sure to spoil everything."

"Oh, well, I mean to enjoy myself, anyway," Daisy said light-heartedly. She had just caught sight of a tall figure, a dark, bewildering face, and her heart gave a mighty bound.

"He is here!" was her first ecstatic thought, "and I didn't dream that he was coming. How kind of Mrs. St. Albert! though of course she couldn't have known that I should care," she

added to herself with a sort of shock at the direction her thoughts had taken. She chatted on for a few moments more with Rose Dimmock, and then moved on.

Everywhere she encountered the octogenarian, Uncle Sam, enlightening all who would listen to him on the condition of the thermometer, with as genuine an interest as if he had been the veritable clerk of the weather.

"Miss Daisy! I had not hoped to see you so soon!"

It was Rush Severn, his face aglow, and that peculiar expression in his handsome eyes, that, while it flattered the girl, she had almost learned to dread.

He quietly pushed a chair forward; and as she had no valid excuse to give, why she should not sit down, she took it. As she did so, he watched her movements with an eagerness that implied a desire to do her a favor, to be her very humble servant. Never before, he said to himself, had she looked so beautiful. The filmy laces, and the clear ivory tints of her complexion, supplemented each other.

"I hear you are an invalid," she said, with a sweeping, uneasy glance about the room. But the face she looked for was not in sight.

"A very healthy one, Miss Daisy; but slight as

my infirmity is, I fear it will prove to be a great drawback to the pleasure of the evening. You are very fond of dancing, I suppose?"

"Very," said Daisy, wondering to herself whether Temple knew how to dance, and deciding that he did not. "Still, there are other things quite as pleasant."

"You will sing," he said.

"Yes; some little trifle that I can accompany myself with; some old song."

"You sing old songs rarely well. I wish I might dare choose the song," he said.

"I wish you would," she said brightly. "What would please you?" she asked with a fervor of interest for which she blushed a moment later.

"It's a foolish little song, yet I should like to hear it, though it is old."

"What is it? Perhaps I sing it," she said.

"I think you do."

It was on his lips to say, "I Love But You." At the last, however, his audacity failed him. He dared not ask for the song with her eyes looking into his. The blood rushed to his head for a moment, but he kept his equipoise as he answered, "'Speak to Me,' by Campana."

"That's a love-song, isn't it?" she asked. And a voice soft and rich seemed echoing through the silence, "I don't like love-songs."

"Yes, it is open to that meaning," he made reply. "But, then, love-songs are always in fashion."

"I don't think I remember that one," she said, "and I had already made up my mind to sing another — something with which I can play my own accompaniment."

"It is very kind of you to sing at all," he said. "But, Miss Daisy, why don't you like love-songs?"

"I did not say that," she answered, blushing rosy-red. "If you remember, I said I could not play that particular one."

"Your manner said it, then. I recall feeling as if you had an aversion to them."

"Really, if my manner of speaking is so suggestive," laughed Daisy, "I had better hold my tongue."

"It was really my fault in putting that interpretation upon it," he said hastily. "I am always taking things for granted, though not in any very serious way," he added, as she drew back a little. "Have you practised the organ much since — that morning?"

Daisy shook her head. Why should she feel nervous? But she did. If she had only taken the precaution to keep Rose with her. Rush Severn's manner was altogether too pronounced, she thought, for a public place like that. People

would and must observe it. The way he looked at her, claiming her entire attention, his very attitude, suggested a something different from usual. He sat with his elbow on one knee, leaning forward, his cheek upon his hand.

And just at that moment Andrew Temple came into view. He had not seen her yet, Daisy thought, and she experienced a strange desire to get out of sight. What a king among men he was ! Taller by head and shoulders than any one there. Surely, if the term god-like could be applied to a mortal, it might be to him. Every curve of his body was grace itself, and the poise of his head was kingly.

Daisy wondered as he came nearer if he had seen her yet, and became conscious of an almost insane wish to get out of Rush Severn's vicinity. Then suddenly her mood changed. What was it to Temple who she talked with, or what she did ? She turned to the young professor with a laughing speech, and seemed to listen in an intense sort of way to his answer. Her manner flattered him, and brought all that was brilliant in him to his aid. Nor was Daisy fairly conscious of what she was doing or saying, till some one came to her with a request from Mrs. St. Albert: Would she kindly favor the company with a song ?

Daisy started to her feet, so did Rush Severn,

with the offer of his arm, which Daisy took, though not without an inward protest. Of course Mr. Temple must cross their path, see her, give her the courtesy of a cold bow, and leave her, angry with herself and Rush Severn, who, poor fellow, had never felt so happy, so signally honored, in his life. Seating her at the piano, he stood aside, yet holding his vantage-ground as others crowded round. Song after song was called for, most of them old favorites. She had never sung with more sweetness, force, and skill.

Quite near her, and where she could see him, stood Andrew Temple, watching the delicate curves of the youthful, beautiful figure, the soft contour of her face, and drinking in the tones of the superb voice, from the first note to the last, with head slightly drooped, and eyes dilated.

“Indeed, I cannot sing another, song” said Daisy, to one of her admirers. “Professor, give me my gloves, please.” The young fellow, proud and happy, hastened to comply with her request, and also presented her with a bouquet of blush-roses, exquisitely arranged with hot-house flowers and ferns.

“Oh, how lovely! Am I to thank you for this?” she asked, rising from the piano.

“Mr. Temple sent them,” whispered Rose Dimmock, at her elbow. “I saw him.”

"Ah!" Daisy buried the hot blush that sprang to her cheeks in the fragrant flowers. She could not even look towards the donor, much less thank him. Almost unconsciously she took Rush Severn's arm again, and hurried away from the little group about the piano. More than one looker-on remarked, "What a beautiful couple!"

So thought Andrew Temple as he watched them till they were lost in the crowd. He had noticed the way she took the flowers,—her glance of surprise, the quick, warm color that mantled her cheeks,—and for a moment his pulses beat high. He said to himself that he must not suffer this sudden buoyancy of spirits to get the better of him. Though this was the first woman he had ever felt that he could love, yet delicacy prescribed a very rigid discretion, for he was years older in every thing that pertained to life and experience. Rush Severn loved her. He was young, possessed of talents that ran in the same direction as her own, and would undoubtedly make a career for himself. No responsibilities had weighted him, making him old before his time, cutting off the delights of all those possessions in which a man glories. He, probably, had nothing to regret in his past that had given him sleepless nights and anxious days.

"No; I must resign myself to disappointment,"

he said, "and make Fame my mistress, since to make a home is denied me."

So he threaded his way through the throngs of laughing, well-dressed people, spoke a word or two to the hostess, and declared to himself that he would leave at once.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT THE RECTOR DID.

REFRESHMENTS had been served. The rector sat in an ante-room, a plate heaped high with luscious grapes, beside him, on a pretty table of ormolu.

"You know I very seldom eat anything but fruit after the sun goes down," he said, as Mrs. St. Albert pressed upon his attention some of the dainties of the table.

"But these are South American delicacies,—fruits in sirup, in sugar. They came down the Amazon. Amazon is no longer the proper pronunciation. Cleopatra herself—it is not good taste any more to say Cleopatra—never touched anything more toothsome. Do try them;" and she smiled winsomely, her dimples making her well-nigh irresistible.

"Not one," he said, laughing, and shaking his head. "I am going to settle down to solid enjoyment. Come here, Temple, and help me," he called out, as Andrew was passing the door.

"Excuse me. I'm going home," was the answer.

"Nonsense, man. Can't you allow yourself a little enjoyment? I suppose there are card-tables here, somewhere, and a smoking-room; eh, Mrs. St. Albert?"

"Thanks; but I don't know one card from another—and—you forget that I never smoke," was Temple's answer, as he lounged into the room.

"Pardon me, but will you allow me to look at you?" Mrs. St. Albert asked, surveying him as if he were some new species from Wonderland, her laughing eyes bright with mischief. "If you don't know one card from another, and never smoke, I can understand why my neighbors are so busy about you. You are not a man like other men, but a sort of demigod in your own person,—make your own heaven, and all that. Pray, would you like to be worshipped? You ought to be. You put me in mind of Nana, my old nurse," she continued, as he stood the running fire of her jokes manfully. "She never saw but one Episcopalian clergyman, fo' shu, but he wor de goddlesses man dat she eber did see, fo' he put his night-gown ober his cloes to keep 'em clean ebery time he went into de chuch, an' cleanless wor nex' to godiless."

"Oh, fie! Mrs. St. Albert!" said the rector, laughing in spite of himself, "you are coming too close to the cloth now."

"Am I? Then I'll leave you, and get away altogether. You're sure you won't have any of these dainties? 'Sweets to the sweet,' you know. I wish you joy of your feast."

"What a very odd little lady!" said Andrew Temple, in a half-amused, half-vexed tone.

"Just one of the purest-hearted, kindest little women in the world; only she has a way of her own. She is solidly sensible, with all her oddities. I don't know of any members who are more consistent or more valuable than Mr. St. Albert and his wife."

"So the neighbors talk about me, put me down atheist, and all that, I suppose," said Temple.

"Very likely," said the rector, laughing. "You are trying to drag me into an inferno, and I am trying to hoist you into heaven. I wonder which will succeed, according to their calculations. But come, take some grapes. We can both agree upon the fact that they are good for both soul and body. Sit down, Andrew Temple."

So Temple allowed himself to subside into an easy-chair, though still strong in his purpose to leave.

Meantime Daisy was searching for her brother.

"You'll find him in the blue room, talking to that awful man," said Rose, in passing.

"What awful man?" asked Daisy, who had dismissed Rush Severn in the most summary manner; that is, she had run away from him.

"That Mr. Temple," said Rose, with a curling lip.

"I wish you to understand that Mr. Temple is our — my brother's friend," said Daisy with a little fire.

"And yours too, I fancy. Well, you needn't flush up that way. Nobody says he isn't handsome or famous, but brains and beauty are not everything."

Daisy parted the *portière* which divided the pretty little blue room, with its choice divan and *bric-à-brac*, from the main rooms. Almost everybody had gone in to supper. Mrs. St. Albert had carried off the rector's wife on her arm.

"Arthur," she said softly.

"Come in, little one," was the quick answer, and Daisy found herself beside her brother, and opposite his friend, into whose brilliant eyes a sudden pleasure had come.

"You find me feasting on prisoned sunshine," said the rector. "Look at these lucent globes bursting with wine. They grew in vineyards down the slopes of California hills. They are the

king's own fruit, and a prince is eating them. Have some? By the way, where is Mary? I haven't seen her since we came in. She is getting a little wild, I fear, for a matron of her staid character. Having a good time, Daisy?"

"Yes — only" — she stammered, paused, and looked down.

"Why are you not out to supper?"

"We girls don't care a bit for supper, we are all so disappointed."

"Disappointed! what about?" asked the rector. Daisy's arm had stolen round her brother's neck. Andrew Temple sat back and enjoyed the beautiful picture she made with that slight shade of sadness or annoyance on her speaking features.

"Why, you know we *always* dance at Mrs. St. Albert's parties."

"Yes, and you dance to-night, don't you?"

"No."

"Why not, pray? Everybody seems well and happy."

"There's no one to play."

"Where's the fiddler?"

"Somebody died in his family, and he couldn't come."

"Well, where's Severn?"

"His hand is hurt. He tried, but he couldn't play."

"Well,—some of you can play."

"No — we couldn't — we should keep horrid time — and besides, we all want to dance. This is the only time we get a chance, you know."

"Oho! well, I don't see, then, but they must do without the dance."

"Oh, brother!"

"Oh, sister! Sit down and engage in a little wise conversation with Temple and myself, then. Won't that do instead? We two old fellows don't want to dance, consequently can't understand why you do."

She put her hand on his lips. Temple drew a long breath. The touch of those pretty fingers, and a kiss on them, would have been rapture to him.

"Temple, don't you play?" asked the rector, taking some more grapes.

"I'm sorry to say I don't," said the other meekly.

"Nor dance?"

"I'm sorry to say I do," was the response.

"Sorry you do, and sorry you don't. That's a sort of paradox I don't understand."

"Because, of course, I'm too old," was the grim reply.

"Nonsense. It would be a good thing for you, a physical reaction that might do the soul good,

in a way. Well, Daisy, I don't see what you are going to do. I'm sorry for the girls, I really am. I want them to enjoy themselves. But there it is—no music."

"Oh, brother!" he looked up at the pleading tone, pretending not to understand.

"The girls all say, that is—Mrs. St. Albert says"—she stopped short.

"Well, what do the girls all say? What does Mrs. St. Albert say?"

"But you never would."

"I never would what? You are beating about the bush with a vengeance."

"Well, but—would *you* play for them?"

She stood a little back now: the coaxing face, the sparkling eyes, so wistful, the whole charming pose, fascinated Temple. His very heart was drawn out of him at the sight.

"I! utterly dreadful! What would the wise-acres say? Temple, how do you think it would look for the rector to play for his flock—the lambs, I mean—to dance? I'm afraid the sheep would make a great to-do. However, sweetheart, tell the children not to worry. I'll play, of course, for an hour, rather than they should go home sorrowful,—no longer. Remember, an hour, by the clock. It will be eleven, then, and I am for moderation in all things. There, go tell the youngsters to get ready."

"Prince, you are worthy of your name!" said Temple, looking his admiration.

"He is the dearest brother in the world!" said Daisy, with grateful emphasis; and her shapely hand went patting over his shoulder, while her happy, dimpled face was a study.

Andrew Temple opened his lips, shut them, then making one supreme effort, he asked, —

"Miss Daisy, may I have one dance?"

"Why, certainly. You shall have the first," said Daisy; and away she went, dizzy with pleasure, yet asking herself if he thought she had been too willing.

"I needn't have told him which one," she said to herself, biting her lip. "I might have left the choice to him."

Nevertheless, when she found herself in his firm clasp, moving to the beautiful rhythmic measure of the waltz, she forgot all annoyance. Her heart was at rest. Forever and forever she could have gone on with that majestic figure beside her, the dark, kindling eyes looking into her own in the brief pauses of the dance.

CHAPTER XIII.

IMPULSIVE WORDS.

"WILL you rest a little while?" Daisy's partner asked, in his singularly musical voice, as there came a lull, and the dancing ceased for a few moments.

"Yes, though I am not a bit tired," said Daisy *naively*.

"Nor am I," he responded, leading her to a seat.

"I forgot—I promised a dance to Professor Severn. I wonder if he is coming now, to claim it;" and there was an air of annoyance in her manner that she was hardly conscious of showing.

"Can't Professor Severn wait? or are you very punctilious about these engagements? He does not seem to see us yet. It won't hurt him to go hunting a little while. Do you know that I never thought so highly of your brother as I do now? It is so grand in him to lend himself to the task of making his people happy! There is that spice of the world in him which I think a clergyman

should have in order to win the world's devotees. I can't tell you how much I admire him."

"My brother is a wise man in his generation, I think," Daisy said with a winning smile. "At any rate, he makes himself friends on all sides. Some of the people won't like this, but he will make it all right with them."

Just then Rush Severn met some one mid-way of the long room, who must have asked a service of him, for he turned round at once and went out into the hall.

"There, we are left for a little longer chat, after all," said Temple, giving himself up soul and body to the chances of the moment, and smiling in her eyes in a way that made them drop.

"How glad I am that I came," he began, in a low voice; "and that I had the courage to ask you to dance."

"The courage!" she repeated. "Why, were you afraid of me?" and she laughed at the incongruity of the idea.

"Yes," he answered gravely.

"And why, pray?"

"Because I know what people think about me because I dare voice my opinions, and — what they may, probably will, say to you about me. Your brother understands me. Few men do, or women either. And therefore I said to myself, I

will deny myself the pleasure of this party to which the presence of one or two persons only lends interest to me sufficient to break over my barrier of isolation. But something drew me here as with a powerful magnet. I said I *will not*, with all the resolution of my soul, and turned round and came."

"I wonder what that something was?" Daisy thought, but did not speak, only with her eloquent eyes.

"And now I am selfishly detaining you from the dance, and the hour is flying. I ought to be ashamed of myself."

"You are not detaining me. I don't care so much about dancing, myself. I wanted the others to have a good time," said Daisy. "I must keep my promise to Professor Severn, of course, but just now he seems to be engaged elsewhere."

"Professor Severn is—looks, at least, like a very clever fellow," said Temple, smoothing the golden-brown mustache that did not conceal a pair of finely cut lips.

"He is a very clever teacher," said Daisy demurely. "Not as strict, perhaps, as he ought to be," she added, laughing.

"Not, perhaps, with you," the other said with a quick, searching glance.

She laughed, coloring a little.

"Oh! I don't know about that," she said. "One can't question or criticise one's teacher, you see," and she looked up archly into his face. He watched her features with an eagerness in which, unconsciously, he put all of desire, of passionate love, that possessed him just then.

"To be your teacher," he said, under his breath, repressed tenderness in every word, "I would give ten years of my life."

"And what would you teach me?" she dared to ask smilingly, though she trembled from head to foot with the fear and the hope that were mingled in her bosom.

"I would teach you to love me."

The words were spoken, but instantly there rushed over him an overwhelming regret. What had he dared to say to this innocent, confiding girl? How had his tongue rushed headlong of his desire, and said that that could not be unsaid? What punishment did he not deserve? He dared not look at Daisy, or he might have taken courage. Surely he would have seen the flash of surprise, delight, and modest confusion with which she had heard that which no true man could say thoughtlessly, or with cool, calculating speech. As for her, her thoughts were all in a tumult, and yet she was so happy that she was frightened at her own emotions.

The words had been spoken to her, of her, and by the man who, she herself dared acknowledge to herself, possessed more of her thoughts than she had ever given to one not in her own immediate family. He was great, handsome, and kind ; and yet he loved her — a simple girl, whose only wonder-gift was her voice. She could not have spoken if it had been to save her life. Fortunately, at that moment, Rush Severn came to claim her hand for the dance. He had come in from another direction, and she had not seen him. Andrew Temple looked up with burning eyeballs as the shadow of the young man fell upon him.

“Mr. Temple, you will excuse me,” said Daisy with gentle dignity, and then, in an impulse of tenderness, held out her hand, gave him one shy glance that heightened the charms of her blushing face, and glided away on Rush Severn’s arm.

“Now I *will* go,” said Temple to himself, biting his lips fiercely. “She did right to make no reply when I made such a fool of myself. In pity — angelic pity — she gave me her hand. There was pity in her sweet face. I took an unmanly advantage of her to speak as I did. What would Prince think of me, I wonder? Well, well; I have shut the doors of paradise on myself, stumbling fool that I am. And yet, — oh, my God! how I love that girl !”

CHAPTER XIV.

MARGY'S CURIOSITY.

WHEN Daisy sought her pillow, it was one o'clock.

The moon shone brightly in at the window near her bed. Her eyes were wide open, a glad and tender light in their blue depths, and her face wore an expression of almost angelic repose.

"He loves me! He loves me!" so she kept repeating to herself. "And yet he looked afterwards as if sorry he had spoken. Perhaps all men feel that way, because we women never know what to say. I'm sure I did not. How could I tell him 'I was never so happy in my life'? How could I say, 'I do love you *now*'? — though I do! I do!"

She hid her face in the pillow.

"He is so much grander than other men," she went on, "that he seems kingly in comparison. When he walks, his steps are long and free — and that dance! Ah! I could have glided on for hours. And I know he loves me. I have hoped

all along, but now I *know!* Sometime — not right away, but perhaps soon — he will speak to Arthur. I know he is the soul of honor. What will Arthur say? Oh! I wish I knew."

"I would teach you to love me," he said. I do believe the words were a surprise to him as well as to me. But," and in her face there came a sudden brightness, "he said them!"

At breakfast on the following morning, the conversation naturally turned upon the party. Margy was waiting upon table, dressed as usual, the snowy apron and trim cap which she always wore in the early part of the day, setting off her comely face and figure. The twins were still asleep.

"It seemed so odd," said Mary, addressing her husband, "to see you at the piano, playing for the dancing."

"Did you hear any one speak of it?" asked the rector, of Daisy.

"Only to praise you," she answered with a beaming smile.

"Ah! I can guess who that was," he responded. "Poor children! I shouldn't have slept if I had let them do without their dance. And yet it was rather an anomalous position," he added, smiling. "I shouldn't wonder if it got into the papers."

"Oh, dear! I hope not," said Mary nervously.

She was holding the cup while Margy made ready to pour the coffee.

"No harm done, I imagine," the rector said, laughing. "By the way, Daisy, how did you enjoy your dance with Temple? I never dreamed he could dance."

Mary gave a little cry. All eyes turned towards her.

"I never knew you so careless before, Margy. That coffee is scalding hot." She had put down her cup and was wiping her hand.

"I'm so sorry," said the woman with a colorless face. "I hope it isn't very bad."

"Well, bad enough," said Mary, more gently. "See, it is blistering. Never mind, it will stop smarting soon, I hope. Yes," she turned to Daisy, "I saw Mr. Temple dance, and, for so tall a man, I must say he was grace itself. Daisy was like a wisp of straw, carried round. She had nothing to do."

"It was delicious," said Daisy, "the very poetry of motion. I missed him, though, after dancing with Rush Severn. Did you see him before he left?"

"No," said her brother; "but he came over to the piano and stood awhile, looking somehow, dazed.

"'Are you tired, Temple?' I asked; and he gave me a queer answer, quite Temple-esque.

"‘Yes; body and soul.’ Then he was silent for a few moments, but spoke again.

"‘I envy you, Prince,’ he said. ‘I would give anything to be able to make so much happiness as you do.’

"‘Just come into the church,’ said I, ‘and I’ll teach you to be happy, and make others happy.’

"‘If I ever do,’ he said earnestly, ‘it will be through your example.’

"I had to swallow the compliment; and, indeed, I believe he meant it. Andrew Temple seems to me a singularly honest, truthful, reliable man.”

Margy set down some sauce-dishes at that moment; but her hand must have shaken, for they toppled over, and all came down in a heap.

"Margy, I believe you’re suffering with neuralgia again,” said Mr. Prince, after the slight confusion had subsided.

"No; but I’m not as well as usual, I believe,” was the woman’s comment, as she gathered up the dishes.

"Indeed, you can’t be well. You’re as white as a sheet. Daisy and I can attend to things now. Go rest yourself a while,” Mary said.

The woman gave one wild look round the table, and then took advantage of the offered favor, and went out into the large, sunny kitchen

Zue stood by the window. She was placing an array of paper figures on the table.

"That's my father," she said, turning to her mother, and indicating a tall old gentleman cut out of some magazine. "I'm going to have a father anyway, if he is only paper. And that's my grandfather. He's a king without a crown. Kings make good grandfathers, don't they? They give you everything you want. Stop! Stop!" shrilly and angrily, for up went her mother's hand, and swept all the puppets off the table and out of the window.

"I won't have you all the time talking about fathers and grandfathers. You shall stop this nonsense, or I'll burn every picture you've got."

"You're a cruel, wicked mother," sobbed Zue, with a scared face. "What makes you look at me that way? I *will* talk of fathers and grandfathers; and if you burn them I know where to get more, lots more. I can make them myself."

The woman did not answer. She was white to the lips. With a quick, fierce gesture she turned away.

"Yes, he *was* there," she muttered. "He goes everywhere she goes. He means something. Dance—yes; and gamble and carouse. Oh! how he is covering up his real character! I don't wonder he is tired, body and soul. It is keeping

up the farce that wearies him. I shall have to tell ! I must ! And yet I had rather die. I might leave here,—but, oh ! where should I go ? It is the only place I can be happy in. Where could I go ? ”

She walked back and forth through the sunny kitchen, her hands clinched and her face working. The very vigor and heat of her imaginings changed her features, and gave to their usual calm and stateliness a sort of fury. Jealousy keen and terrible—jealousy, too, of one she loved and delighted in—added to her torture.

“ And yet I’ll have nothing to do with him, nothing ! ” she muttered. “ If he offered me himself and all his money and fame for compensation, I’d spurn them. I wouldn’t look at him,—no, not even for Zue’s sake, I hate him so. And he’s in love with Miss Daisy ; and, far, far worse, she is in love with him. Oh, one can tell by the way her face lights up.”

“ Where is Zue, Margy ? ”

The woman paused in her walk as Daisy’s sweet face appeared.

“ She’s out-of-doors, somewhere,” said Zue’s mother, going towards one of the windows.

“ I brought her some candies from the party,” said Daisy, displaying a paper parcel.

“ Here I am ! ” said Zue, running joyously for-

ward. "Miss Daisy, I'm so glad to see you all safe. I was frightened last night because mother said you were going into danger."

"What made you?" asked Daisy, turning towards Margy.

"The child don't know what she's talking about half the time," Margy made reply.

"Yes, I do," said Zue. "Oh! Miss Daisy, is *your* father dead?"

"Long ago," said Daisy.

"And your mother?"

"Yes," Daisy answered with a sad smile.

"I wish my mother was dead," said the child, in all seriousness.

"Why, Zue! what a wicked wish! What a mean girl you must be!" said Daisy, horrified, and casting a deprecating glance towards Margy.

"I'm sure she don't wish it more than her mother does sometimes," said Margy in a depressed voice. "Only who would the child go to, poor little wretch?"

"Miss Daisy would take care of me," said the girl.

"I'm not so sure of that," said Daisy, quickly and coldly.

"Well, then, I'd take care of myself," was the child's comment. "I guess I could," she added, arching her head proudly.

"Are you better, Margy?" Daisy asked, as the child took herself and her sweetmeats to the farther end of the room.

"Oh, yes! much better," the woman made effort to answer. "So you had a good time last night," she added, rapidly changing the subject. "Nobody there looked as pretty as you, I warrant."

"Oh, yes! there were some beautiful dresses," said Daisy.

"And who did you dance with?" the woman asked with the freedom of a privileged character.

"The professor and one or two others," Daisy said evasively.

"I thought you said that Mr. Temple danced," said Margy.

"He does, beautifully. One would hardly think so, seeing him under ordinary circumstances."

"Why?" the word was almost fiercely uttered.

"Because he is so grave and wise and learned."

"That's because he is old. Men change so. They sow their wild oats, too. I wonder if he ever sowed his!"

"He doesn't seem so very old to me," said Daisy.

"You're eighteen. He's just seventeen years older."

"Why, how did you know that?" asked Daisy wonderingly.

"I judge by his appearance," said the woman, holding her bitter feelings in check. "Men show their age. They can't disguise it as women can." She laughed, trying to speak lightly.

Daisy felt as if some one had wounded her. Something like resentment surged up in her bosom.

"You never seemed to like him. You never speak well of him," she said, watching the changes that passed over Margy's face. "One would think you had some personal feeling against him."

Margy laughed. The laugh had a hollow sound. Unconsciously she had come near to showing her own suffering, and pride came to her rescue.

"He isn't the kind of man I like," she said, "but it's only a fancy, perhaps. And what are my fancies? I'm fonder of the professor, who seems so young and innocent. I'll wager he has had no wild oats to sow. For you see when a man lives to *that* age without marrying — but there! What do I meddle for? And there's the breakfast dishes standing, I declare."

Not only one, but two or three thorns seemed pricking into Daisy's consciousness, as she left the kitchen, and went into the study. That indefinable something in Margy's manner that worried her whenever she spoke of Temple, made her uneasy. That something was wrong with Margy,

she could not help seeing, and that the suffering, from whatever cause it sprung, was mental.

"Curious," she said to herself, "Margy never has these turns and humors except when Mr. Temple comes here. She must have taken a sudden hatred to him, or else — I have heard of love at first sight." She laughed gleefully. "Maybe the poor thing is in love with him."

She fairly danced at the thought; her slim young figure describing curves and circles that would have set an artist wild. The idea of Margy being in love tickled her sense of humor, and, of all men in the world, with Andrew Temple!

The bell rang. Daisy paused in her fantastic gyrations, blushing furiously. Her first impulse was to run. She heard the rector coming down-stairs, playfully insisting on having the last word with his wife. If it should be Temple! And she had been thinking such ridiculous things. But suddenly the impulse wavered, as her hand touched the door-knob. It was not Andrew Temple, but, instead, Rush Severn, inquiring for her.

"It is lesson-day," she said to herself, "but why has he come so early?"

Another moment the young man was in the study.

"Excuse me for coming before the hour," he said, smiling, his eyes kindling at sight of her, "but I

have an urgent business call that will take me to the city in the middle of the day. Lovely weather, isn't it?" He drew off his gloves and placed them on the table, as Daisy led the way to the parlor. "How are you feeling after the gayety of last night? I don't see that you look at all fatigued."

"Oh, no! I had plenty of sleep," said Daisy. "I thought perhaps your invalid hand would excuse me from a lesson to-day. I meant to have an idle time of it."

She looked so arch and pretty that the young man could find no words for a moment, so used his eyes eloquently.

"But, after all, you don't have to use your hand," she added; "and I don't suppose it will interfere with your tongue at all. You can scold just as vigorously."

"Do I ever scold?" he asked with an expression so pathetic, and a manner so tender, that Daisy laughed and blushed and turned to the piano.

"Not half enough to keep me up to my practice," she said, placing her music on the rack.

He sat on her left and leaned against the piano. Sometimes he touched her as he bent forward, and felt a blissful sense of being near her. Ah! if he only dared to speak the words that hovered

on his lips. She was so kind last night! If only he dared!

“Miss Daisy,” he said once abruptly.

“What is it?” She turned her beautiful throat and fixed her eyes upon him. All power of speech was gone again.

“Only — only — was that chord quite right? Play it again, please.”

“This one?” and she repeated it.

“Yes — perhaps — yes, I think it was,” he blundered, and knit his brows and smothered his resolve, and was intensely miserable.

“I’m awfully stupid,” she said, toiling through the next two bars, then coming to a sudden stop. He looked over her shoulder.

“Fortunately my right hand is free from infirmity,” he said, laughing, and leaned a little across to show her how it should be played, touching her dress and her arm.

She was grateful. He turned away still with the thrill of her touch upon him. Why should he not dare to speak? He was her equal, a man of fair expectations. His father was a rich man, his own income a good one. This girl whom he had loved from the first moment he had set eyes on her was near his own age. She, too, was a musical enthusiast. She had no fortune; her brother cared for her, and he had nothing but his salary. Why should he not speak?

The moments were flying ; the opportunity, so golden, might not occur again. Daisy had never seemed more gentle, more sympathetic. How could he know that the memory of certain words spoken to her, with leaping pulses, and an utter forgetfulness of the fitness of things, curved her lips with smiles, gave her that happy abandon of manner that made her so irresistible ?

“I would teach you to love me.”

The little sentenee was burned into her soul, and seemed destined to determine her future. Even now she was thinking of it with shining eyes.

“Miss Daisy, may I speak to you ?”

CHAPTER XV.

A DECLARATION OF LOVE.

THE tone, the look of the man as he asked this question, startled her. She turned her flower-like face towards him, a vague, faint surprise in the soft glance. So intently had she been thinking that she had almost forgotten his presence, so she was startled at the expression in his eyes, the anxious brows, the concentrated passion that seemed to possess him so powerfully that it shone in every line of his face.

“Certainly,” she said, in a low, musical voice. He was watching her with a strange eagerness, all but forgetting that he had spoken.

“Miss Daisy, may I tell you? Oh! I cannot use words in an acceptable fashion. I love you. Miss Daisy — don’t move — don’t go!” he added in an agony of doubt and desire. “I couldn’t help it! If I had died for it, I couldn’t help it! I have wanted to say this — you do not answer. Give me a little hope !”

Unconsciously he had clasped his hands, and

now he sat before her in the attitude of supplication. He looked so handsome that Daisy, all in a tremor of agitation, wondered why she could not answer to his love ; but her heart was cold. Not a pulse beat quicker : she was trembling, but it was with wonder and sorrow.

“ O Mr. Severn ! ” was all she said, with a little movement of withdrawal. He saw that, and with all his anguish, he tried to smile.

“ You are not afraid of me, are you ? ” he asked, letting his voice fall, and giving a long-drawn sigh.

“ Afraid of you ? No, indeed, Mr. Severn ! But, oh ! I am so sorry ! I like you so much — as my teacher — as my friend — but not in that other way.”

“ Perhaps you do not know,” he said, grasping the back of her chair ; “ perhaps you do not comprehend your own emotions. O Miss Daisy ! I have hoped you more than liked me. I might speak of my prospects. I am an only son : my income is assured. I have only to say the word, and secure a life-long position of great prominence. But I have not cared to think of that till — till I knew how you felt.”

He rose, walked a little apart, as Daisy, confused and distressed, turned the music-sheets before her. Then he came back and stood leaning an elbow on the piano.

“Tell me only that I may hope a little ; that perhaps you can learn to love me ; and I will wait, oh ! so patiently ! I have loved you so long ! ever since that first Sunday — oh ! how well I remember it ! The offertory — the song, ‘I Know a Green Hill Far Away.’” He covered his face with his hands, his voice broke, and it was pitiful to see him struggle for utterance. How true a heart it was ! How honest ! How loving ! Daisy saw it all, felt it all, and could have wept for him. “There ! I won’t give way again. But if you knew what the disappointment is to me ! It means exile from all I hold dear, for I could not stay, with, — near you, and feel that your sweet eyes would never smile in mine as I would have them. Yes — but I can wait — years, if need be — only tell me to hope — a little.”

“Mr. Severn, I cannot.” Her voice faltered, but she was firm. “I never, never can,” she added solemnly. “Oh ! I wish — I wish you had not come just this morning,” she half sobbed. It was her first experience of the kind, and she did not know how to meet it. She even wished she could love him ; but, no, that was impossible.

“It would have happened sometime,” he said after a long pause, during which Daisy kept her tear-filled eyes away from him. “I must have spoken. I did speak to your brother, once, and he

did not discourage me. ‘If you can win her,’ he said, ‘I have no objection.’ That gave me heart and hope, and I thought — I was foolish enough to think — I was not disagreeable to you. Miss Daisy, look in your heart. Can’t you give me a little hope? Say that I go now, and let all be between us as if I had never spoken! Think a moment. Might I not have another trial? Just one more? I will be silent as long as you say. I will be discreet, distant even, if you will only say that perhaps I may win a little of your regard. You don’t know how patient I can be.”

“Indeed I do, Mr. Severn. I know how patient you have been with me, how beautifully kind and patient. And my regard you have always had. I appreciate your worth; I like you, but only,” her voice was like a sob, “only as a dear friend. Nothing more, now nor ever.”

“Nothing more.” He repeated the words hopelessly. Then he turned to the open portfolio and began lifting the music, sheet after sheet, as if in search of something.

“There is a song,” he said presently, entitled ‘No More, No More:’ is it here? Do you know it?”

She shook her head.

“I thought I saw it once in this room,” he went on, his voice grown hoarse and cold. “If you

have never seen it, I hope you never may, for it is written as with the heart's blood and the pen of despair. Then this is the last of all my pleasant hopes — the last — the last — of earth for me."

"O Mr. Severn, don't say that!" cried Daisy, all of a tremor.

"I don't mean that I shall hurt myself, or even die for love," he said drearily. "I only mean that every hope seems dead within me. Why did I dare allow myself to love you so? I don't know. It was a madness, but such a heavenly madness! For the last time, Miss Daisy, is there no chance for me, though I wait and wait?"

Daisy shook her head. Her voice was choked with tears, she pitied him so. He looked so handsome in his despair. He was young, ardent, enthusiastic, liked what she liked; and yet that other face, grave, dark, with the bewildering eyes and the inscrutable expression, stood between them.

"I love but him," her heart cried passionately. "I love him even as this man loves me."

This conviction woke in her heart a divine pity.

"Well," the word was like a death-knell. He rose mechanically, put back the music, turned once and looked at her. Then his heart seemed to smite him.

"I didn't mean to distress you," he said com-

passionately, "though God knows my heart is heavy enough. But I can bear it, that is—I will bear it as a man should. And for you I shall ever have the deepest respect. If it were only mine to smooth your path and guide you through life! But it is not to be; you have assured me so, and I know you are the soul of truth. Perhaps some one more favored than I has won your affections. If so, God bless and prosper him," his voice faltered a little, "for your sake."

He was gone; and Daisy ran up to her room, threw herself on the bed, and sobbed and sobbed. If she had but been prepared for this ordeal—but it had taken her entirely by surprise.

Her sister-in-law heard her, and came hurrying into the room.

"What is it, dear?" she cried, grown pale with fear.

"O Mary, did you have to go through all this?" was the sobbing question.

"What in mercy do you mean?" Mary asked. "Why, you look like—I don't know what you look like. Your hair is tumbled all over your head, and your cheeks are like fire. What has happened? Wait, let me bathe your face with a little cologne, then you shall tell me all about it. There, there;" and she patted her cheeks, and dabbed her forehead with a wet handkerchief,

cautioning her to shut her eyes, until presently Daisy sat up and her sobs ceased.

"Now you can tell me all about it. What has happened to disturb you so?"

"I think it's perfectly awful," said Daisy, choking again, "perfectly awful!"

"Will you please enlighten me? What is it that is so awful? Is the kitten dead?"

"O Mary!" and Daisy flashed a reproving glance at her sister-in-law. "No; but to have some one love you, and you don't love him a b-bit. I suppose all women have to bear it, but it certainly is dreadful!"

"What! have you had an offer?" asked Mary.

"Yes," and Daisy's lip trembled.

Mary sat down, laughing.

"You precious, idiotic child!" she exclaimed. "And to think you are crying over it. Most women would laugh."

"Then most women are cruel, heartless things," said Daisy with unwonted animation. "Then they are not real women. Why, I wouldn't go through with it again for worlds. Oh!" and she shuddered, "to think of any one loving you so dearly, and you can't return it the least little bit. O Mary! what did you do,—laugh?"

"Why, of course I did. I never had but one offer, and that I said 'Yes' to. I've never been

sorry, either. But you poor, tender-hearted little goose ! who proposed to you ? Mr. Temple ? ”

Daisy gave a faint cry, and up went both hands to her face ; but they could not hide the rosy flush that spread all in a moment over cheeks, forehead, and throat. Mary was startled.

“ *Was it Mr. Temple ?* ” she asked more seriously.

“ How could you imagine such a thing ? ” Daisy cried in well-simulated indignation. “ No, indeed. I haven’t seen Mr. Temple this morning.”

“ I’m glad it wasn’t he,” said Mary quietly. “ He’s a deal too old for you ; and, besides, I’m afraid of his views. I want you to marry a man of settled religious convictions. Well, if it was not Mr. Temple, there is only one other I can think of, Professor Severn — or, perhaps, Doctor Lamprey. He’s nice, if he wasn’t so old and fat.”

Daisy broke into a laugh, the tears still standing on her lashes.

“ Doector Lamprey ! ” she exclaimed. “ How comical he would look with his hand on his heart — that is, if he could get it there. No, Mary, you were right before, it was poor Rush Severn. And, oh ! he is so handsome ! ”

“ Daisy Prince ! you didn’t say no, to him ! He is young, good, and gifted ! ”

“ But I did,” said Daisy, with a pitiful look.

“ You don’t know your own mind, child. How

nice it would be to be settled right here, near us. I do hope he asked for time, and you gave it to him."

"I told him no, never ! never ! never !" and she gave additional emphasis to each repetition.

"Why, Daisy, is it possible that you don't like him ?" her sister-in-law asked.

"Yes ; and that's the trouble. I only *like* him."

"You'll be sure to be sorry. There are not two Rush Severns in one town, or twenty towns like this. Oh, dear ! how *could* you refuse him ?"

"Well, I did ; and it almost killed me, he took it so sweetly," said unphilosophical Daisy, almost crying again. "He didn't scold, nor tear his hair, nor say that he never, never should love another, as they do in novels, but I could see how he suffered. Now, I'm not going to allow myself to speak to another living man. I couldn't go through such a scene again."

"Another living man may not want you," said Mary.

"Well, I'm sure I hope so," Daisy made reply heartily. "I don't want anybody, goodness knows," and she nearly broke down again.

"I suppose I have a right to my private opinion," said Mary. "If you go on in this fashion, I shall have to believe that you love Rush Severn, after all, and you don't know it."

"But I do know it," Daisy averred with spirit, wiping her eyes, getting up and going to the glass where she stood irresolutely; "that is, I know I don't."

"If I may venture to advise you, hadn't you better fix up your hair, bathe your eyes, and go out for a walk this lovely morning?" said her sister-in-law.

"Yes; and perhaps meet him."

"Which him?" asked Mary demurely.

Daisy flushed, and shook her hair down to hide it.

"I don't want to see any of them," she said petulantly. "I wish there was a place where women could just live together by themselves, and be happy."

"As if they could!" said Mary. "But then you can take your choice, and get you to a nunnery or a sisterhood."

"Would you advise me to do either?"

"Well, yes," Mary answered thoughtfully, "if I saw it was your vocation. But I fear even there, there would be some *him* to trouble the sweet tranquillity of your life. They certainly are a dreadfully disturbing element in one's experience."

CHAPTER XVI.

A LEAP FOR LIFE.

THE day was warm, with a slightly cool wind blowing.

"I won't have you mooning round here," Mary said, as Daisy sank listlessly into the first chair, after she had re-arranged her hair. "It is so delightful out doors. Go walk, and forget your trouble. Take Zue with you if you want company."

"I don't want company," Daisy said, "particularly Zue."

"Why, what has the child done now?" Mary asked, her pretty eyebrows lifted a little.

"She is always doing, lately," said Daisy, slowly taking a dress from the closet, and as slowly putting it on, "doing or saying. It don't matter what she fancies, or what she hears, she comes to me with it all. I begin to be afraid of her. I am a little afraid of Margy. Don't *you* see that Margy is strange, sometimes?"

"I will admit that Margy does seem altered of

late," Mary responded. "I hope she is not getting tired of us. I have come to depend so wholly upon her that I should feel lost without her."

"I rather think I could bear it," said Daisy, who was scrutinizing a fold of her frock. "Mary, does this look very shabby? I shall be so glad when I can give music-lessons, and buy me a new gown now and then."

"If Rush Severn goes away, you might get some of his pupils," said Mary. "But we shall never get such another organist."

Daisy did not answer. She stood thinking, as she gave those last, nameless little touches by which women add grace and color and tone to the most simple toilet.

"If Rush Severn goes," Mary had said. Why, of course he would. How she should miss him, after all! There would be a stranger at the organ, a stranger to direct the singing, perhaps. And she had always liked Rush Severn so well, before she had seen Andrew Temple; had come in some way to consider him her speial property. It would be sure to get out that she had refused him,—such news always did,—and the girls would be cross and spiteful towards her. She wished, vaguely, that she could go away herself. There was a standing invitation for her to visit Washington. Her Uncle Herbert, her dead mother's

brother, had been a banker there for nearly twenty years, and was supposed to be a millionaire. Her cousin Eleanor, every time she wrote, repeated her wish that Daisy would come and be introduced to Washington society. But Daisy, beautiful, sweet, and clever as she was, well adapted to shine in any sphere, was only the sister of a country minister, with barely sufficient salary to care for his family. Daisy could not go to Washington without a full and fitting wardrobe. But, oh, how often she wished it were possible!

Thinking of these things, she stepped out into the sunshine, longing for nothing so much as solitude. She took the road that led to an old mill, long ago condemned, and said to be haunted. As she came in sight of the blackened walls, and saw the great wheel on which overrunning vines had twisted themselves picturesquely, while the pretty river, with its fall of greenish-white water, ran tinkling musically by, she drew a sigh of relief. Here no one would disturb her,—no men, at all events.

The crest of a small ridge gained, she sat down upon a mossy stone, and abandoned herself to thought. How still it was! The sun struck out such lovely colors from the hillside! Fleecy, dainty bits of cloud flecked the blue of an autumn sky. Beyond was the town with its houses, its stores, its steeples, and all the suggestions of active

life. Here all was wild, quiet, and peaceful. The sound of the water soothed her like the tones of soft music to which distance lends an indefinable charm. The wind, which had grown warmer, blew the light curls from her temples. She was glad she had come, and by herself. Zue's chatter would have made things out of harmony. Shut in this solitude, she quietly regarded the sky, the fields, and the old mill; when suddenly she sprang to her feet, uttering a low cry. She had discerned the figure of a man inside one of the windows on the second floor of that ruinous edifice, and at once divined who it was. No resident of the place would dare place a foot beyond the doorway of the old mill.

"O Mr. Temple!" she cried, "you don't know! It is unsafe. It may fall any minute."

Her hands extended outwards were tightly clasped, and her face was white as death, such a horror had fallen upon her.

"I find the beams pretty solid," he responded cheerfully, and came full in the window.

"O Mr. Temple, for Heaven's sake come out!" she called, shuddering from head to foot.

"I will, certainly, if you think there is danger," he said, but he was too late. The walls tottered; here and there hideous seams began to show. At once all the front of the old building, all the

bricks of the shattered fabric, gave way. There was a cloud of dust, a hollow thud, and down went the whole of the side wall, choking up the narrow stream below.

Daisy in indescribable terror saw so much, then crouched to the ground, her face hidden in her hands, while a convulsive shudder ran through her frame.

“Don’t be frightened! I am safe!” she heard him cry, and lifted her shuddering face. Yes, there he stood in mid-air on the strong beam that had not given way; but, merciful Heaven! there was nothing for him to hold to. The water below was choked up with timber and stone, from which the dust was still rising like thick yellow smoke. He stood there perfectly motionless, looking down twenty feet or more into the chasm choked with *débris*, his tall figure splendidly outlined against the opposite wall and the light that came in its one narrow window.

“Oh! what shall I do?” moaned Daisy, in an agony of terror. “Wait! I will run and find help,” she cried.

“No, stay where you are,” he said, lifting his voice a little. “I can’t stand unsupported much longer, and the other walls are tottering. I must take my chances and clear this space.”

He lifted his arms, and seemed to sway backward, then forward.

"No! no!" cried Daisy. "It will be sure death." Then she turned away with a scream of horror, crouching close to the ground, her heart beating wildly, her very soul agonizing for his life.

"It was not possible," she said to herself. "He could not jump that terrible distance." In imagination she saw his body torn and mangled amidst the heaps of stones in the choked-up river.

The man, however, had measured the distance with a practised eye. If he swung clear of the ruins below, it would be a leap for life which few but practised gymnasts would have dared. But this was his only chance. The beam on which he stood was insecure. His position, with only foot-hold, nothing above or beneath him by which he could assist himself, made his brain dizzy; and unless he leaped, he would surely fall. Gathering up his energies for the emergency, he drew one long breath, lifted his arms, and took the leap, his tall figure flying, as it seemed, through space.

"I thought I could do it! Why, Miss Daisy! Dear child, how frightened you are! Did I startle you so much?"

Never before had a voice sounded so divinely sweet in Daisy's ears. Not merely the words, but the intonation, were full of meaning. The girl lifted her face by degrees, sobbing and laughing together.

"How did you do it?" she asked hysterically, as he helped her up from her crouching posture, and led her to the seat she had before occupied.

"It was that or death," he said in a low voice; "and I used to be skilful as a gymnast, though I have not practised for years. I came down just a trifle this side of danger, cat-fashion, too, on all-fours. My wrists are a little strained, but other ways I believe I am all right," he added cheerfully.

"Did you never hear," asked Daisy, in a trembling voice, "that the mill has been condemned?"

"Never," he said. "I have been in there three or four times, but I never dreamed of danger. There's a grand view from that west window — or, rather, was. I should like to own the site. It was rather a risky jump, come to look at it," he added, turning his pale, grand face towards her. "But I had no alternative — and, luckily, but little time to think. However, it's all over. I believe I will rest awhile," he continued, seating himself on a tree-stump. "I held my footing almost by a miracle, it seemed. I shall never forget the shock of finding myself left. It was a struggle face to face with death, though, thank God, a brief one."

CHAPTER XVII.

A MORE FORTUNATE WOOER.

HE placed his hat on the grass, and acknowledged to himself the conflict just passed through had unnerved him. Yet he was not sorry that Daisy had witnessed his leap for life. She could never think of him as acting a cowardly part,—succumbing to circumstances. He had not yet forgiven himself for the words he had so impulsively spoken the evening before. He was not usually given to impulse or enthusiasms. All his life had been ordered by the wisest rules and the sagest aphorisms. Had she forgotten? Again and again he had asked himself how he had dared to speak in that way to this innocent girl, who seemed a child beside him. That very morning he had been on his way to the rectory, when he saw Rush Severn stalking along ahead of him, saw him enter the house.

“Always, I encounter him,” he had said as he turned away. “What does it mean, unless it be that he loves her and she loves him? I will accept the omen — and go my way.”

He had not thought to see her again. Her cry of terror at sight of his danger had sent the blood leaping through all his veins, when he stood at the old mill-window.

"But so she might warn any other friend," he thought, as the intoxication of his fancy wore off.
"I will be prudent."

And so he strove to be,—tried not to look in the tender eyes so full of solicitude for him, made light of the accident, called her attention to ferns that grew in the road, a milk-white goat on a ledge above them cropping the scant herbage, the scurrying clouds pure and whitely luminous in the sunshine, the far-off sound of children's voices, a red cow chewing her cud, only a stone's-throw away, and all the time his heart was swelling with love ineffable.

Daisy sat there, content, happy, though still trembling from the effects of her fright. She did not care to talk, to move, to go. It was perfect bliss only to be near him, and he alive, saved from a sudden and horrible death ; to remember with bated breath and hot cheeks what he had said to her, to wonder if he would say it again. All her shyness was gone, yet she did not care to speak.

At last he said, driven to it by the very hunger of his soul,—

"I met your friend — at least, I saw your

music-teacher, this morning. He was going into the rectory."

"Yes: it was lesson-day," she said simply.

"He seems to be an exceptional young fellow," Temple went on, pulling a clover-blossom to pieces.

"He is," said Daisy; "there is no better young man in Fairstock." Unconsciously she was echoing the words of her sister-in-law.

"Undoubtedly he is a great favorite," Temple responded, throwing the denuded stalk away.

"Most people like him," she said quietly.

"And you too?"

Daisy looked up, then her eyes fell. Naturally she thought of the scene between Rush Severn and herself that had taken place that morning, and her cheeks grew scarlet.

"Oh, yes; I like him," she said, with pointed emphasis. "He is a favorite at our house."

"So I should suppose," he answered musingly. "Your brother is such a prodigy himself, that all musicians are his friends. Providence has denied me gifts of that kind," he added, almost bitterly; "or else I have had to work so hard all my life that I have never had time to find out whether I had any special gift. I rather think not, or it would have shown itself in spite of the work. I can't even whistle."

She laughed at the idea, his pathetic voice, and comical way of putting it.

"But you surely love music?" she said.

"Love it! yes, passionately. It lifts me out of myself, soothes and humanizes me, after I have been doing battle for or against this miserable human nature that we lawyers see the wrong side of more than any other professional men. Prince may sometimes catch a glimpse of its fiendishness; but we have to dig down among the putrefaction, and unearth depravity of all colors, till we lose what little faith in man we ever had. After the charnel-house, music comes like the air from heaven, pure and purifying. I don't know anything at all about classical music, but I enjoy it. It scatters the cobwebs from my brain more quickly than anything else."

"Don't you enjoy opera? I do, so much," said Daisy fervently.

"But you have so few opportunities. You hear it so seldom," he said.

"Very seldom," she made answer.

"You should live in the city. There you have golden opportunities."

"I would if it were not for being alone. I could earn my living by my voice," she said, "but I can't leave them all. I had rather wait a little longer, and establish myself here."

"You earn your living! a child like you! Pardon me, but you seem like a child to me. I am getting an old man, you see."

"Hopelessly old," said Daisy, with mock pathos. "You are sure to have white hair soon, particularly after this morning's adventure: but that will only give you a more distinguished appearance. I know a young professor whose beard is slightly gray; he says it is worth two thousand dollars a year to him: so perhaps the grayer you get, the richer you will grow."

He shook his head, laughing, and looking away from her. Her innocent beauty bewildered him. It was of the kind he had so seldom seen amid the surroundings of his life,—pure, exalting. He never saw her that all his nature did not go out in worship. Was it a type of something beyond, invisible, spiritual, perpetually calling the soul to heights above those already attained?

"For her," he had said repeatedly, "I would become a devotee. She would lead me and inspire me. She has laid a spell upon me, as doubtless upon others." How could he learn if she were heart-whole? He dared not risk the ordeal of losing her by asking. Not yet, though the question had trembled in many forms on his lips. He almost hoped she had forgotten the little episode of the night before, though his heart told him that a

woman never forgets such things. Well, he would be happy now, unless Daisy's delicacy took alarm at the sight of a distant figure plodding along. To be sure, he was her brother's friend, but then —

Daisy stirred as if the idea had suddenly been imparted to her.

"I think I had better go," she said. "I only came out for a walk."

"Not yet," he said pleadingly. "There is no old mill to take refuge in, when you are gone."

"Indeed, Mr. Temple, it makes me shudder when I think how you took your life in your hands whenever you went in there," she said earnestly.

"And what is my life?" he answered in a low, passion-filled voice. "A succession of petty triumphs or defeats, eating, drinking, sleeping. What have I to make me fond of life? No one cares for me — in all this wide world no one cares for or loves me."

"O Mr. Temple!"

Her sweet eyes were full of tears, her sweet lips were quivering. What could he do but what he did do? — spring towards her, kneel at her feet, pour out all his heart, his secret love, his soul's entreaty, in such eloquent language that it justified her brother's remark that Temple in the pulpit

would have convicted and converted Lucifer himself.

He had taken her hands and she had not resisted. He had gathered her in his arms, but then she started up, looked round, and moved back.

“ You are right, dearest,” he said, “ but I am so happy I had well-nigh lost my senses ! But this is not a public place. There is no one round. The sight of your tears, and for me, made me oblivious to everything but my mad love for you. I have tried so hard to forget, but your angel face came up in every dry and musty record. I was angry with myself for saying what I did last night, fearing I had offended you ; and now you stand there, and I here, this rock between us, and all the hunger of my heart is gone. Daisy, my Daisy ! ”

He held out his hands. She came towards him, her face as radiant as his own.

“ I was going without speaking, for I am called away to a distant city on important business ; but now I am glad I have said all that was in my heart. I should be happier for it, even if you had not given me the heavenly encouragement you have. And here have I been envying and almost hating that poor boy, who, I am sure, loves you, though not as I do. No man, it seems to me, could love you as I do. Think of it ! You are the first woman I ever saw for whom I could will-

ingly die, if need be, and I am thirty-five years old!" Yes," his face grew luminous, "and this is my birthday. Great Heaven! what an anniversary!" He looked at her with infinite yearning, as he said in a low voice, —

"You do not think me too old?"

"Not one year," she said, smiling. "Were you twenty years older, and I felt towards you as I do now, you would not seem old to me."

"God bless you for that, my darling! Think of it. Yesterday I was friendless, wrecked, forlorn, caring little for the honor men have thrust upon me. To-day I am the happiest man in God's universe. Welcome now hard work, endurance, difficulties, even defeat. Having you, I have all I crave. My life is full. But I promise you I shall be an imperious lover. Nothing less than the whole of that little heart for me. You are quite sure it is mine?"

"I am quite sure," she said, her eyes filled with tears, her face a glory.

"Now we will walk home together," he said, tucking her arm in his. "And we will keep our secret for a little while. I mean that only your brother shall know it. I have something to say to him. And then, if the political preferment which I am led to look for should come, and I am in a position to give my wife a place in the world

worthy of her grace and beauty, then," he looked down into her blushing face, "that world shall know and see. But, darling, you are not very well acquainted with me," he added in a troubled voice, checking his footsteps. "Suppose I were to tell you that there have been some dark episodes in my life, which have clouded it and made me the reserved, doubting individual I was when I first knew your brother?"

"I am sure they were not of your making," she said in a low voice.

"No, no," he repeated, with slow emphasis. "I have been placed in peculiar circumstances through the sins of others. Thank God, I have kept myself upright; but—I will tell all to your brother, however, and to you also in time. You shall not be bound by any promise. I hate engagement-rings, as I hate love-songs. But the wedding-ring! Ah, that is the most beautiful emblem in the world!"

"But why do you dislike love-songs?" she asked. "I have often wondered."

"Would I have said the words I have to you, before a gaping crowd?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"I see," she said, her face kindling. "You are right, and I will never sing a love-song again."

"Only to me."

He placed his hand over hers with a tender pressure. What magic was in that touch ! Every pulse throbbed in response. Was this the same atmosphere into which she had walked, dreading to meet the face of any one she knew ? How little she had dreamed what was coming to pass that morning ! It seemed to her as if she had been re-created that golden day. Joy sat in her heart like a newly crowned king. All things were new. Would it last, she wondered. And then all suddenly came to her inner vision the face of Margy, intense, dark, and pitiful, — Margy, who either loved or hated this man. The shock of the vision made her heart beat more rapidly.

“ Why should I care ? ” she thought. “ What is it to me, or her ? ”

They came in sight of the rectory. Margy, who was standing in the kitchen-window, which looked upon the entrance-gate, started back and away as if she had been shot.

“ Why in the world did she do that ? ” thought Daisy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHAT DAISY THOUGHT.

THEY went into the wide, sunshine-filled hall. Mary was just coming down-stairs.

“Is the rector at home?” asked Temple.

“No,” Mary said: “he just sent word that I need not expect him to dinner. Somebody is sick a long way out of town, and he should not be back till late.”

“Then I will call again,” said Temple.

“Pray stay and take dinner with two forlorn women,” Mary pleaded. Daisy’s eyes seconded the invitation, but he resisted their coaxing.

“You are very kind, but indeed, I must go now. I have letters to write, and my stay in Fairstock is short.” So with a glance — such a glance — at Daisy, he left.

Mary followed her sister-in-law up-stairs.

“See here, Daisy,” she said: “you went away at odds with all the world, this morning, and a faee that gave me the heart-ache, it was so sad. What on earth has come to you since? You looked perfectly transfigured as you came into the

hall just now. I won't have you such a chameleon. Do you know, I was getting worried? I was actually going to send Zue after you; and here you come, radiant."

If Daisy had followed her own inclination, she would have fallen on the neck of her sister-in-law, as Ruth on Naomi's, and confessed the delicious secret, that she was loved by the only man she cared for. But he had pledged her to secrecy for yet a little time, and she nerved herself to combat the inference that her coming home with Temple had evidently caused.

"Do I look so very bright?" asked Daisy, putting her hat and mantle carefully away, and going to the glass. "I have had a pleasant walk; but indeed, instead of looking ruddy, I ought to be as pale as a ghost."

She narrated the scene she had witnessed, and which had come so near being a tragedy. Mary listened with breathless interest and many an ejaculation.

"What a shocking accident it might have been!" she said. "But I am really glad, as long as he is safe, that the horrid old building has fallen at last. No one but a stranger would have entered it."

"How still it is!" said Daisy. "Where are the babies?"

"Zue is taking them round the square."

"Are you sure she is to be trusted?" Daisy asked, glad to change the subject.

"She has taken them before," said Mary, and went into her own room.

Then Daisy sat down to think, hiding her happy face in her hands. The clock struck two. Could it be possible that only five hours had elapsed, and all her life was changed? It took her breath away as she reviewed the incidents of the morning. She felt herself a priestess, hallowed by love. Every sense seemed to be singing paeans of praise. A true man, a man famous in the world of letters, of whom other men spoke with admiration, had told her of his love.

And she had been so near losing him!

"But he lives, and he belongs to me!" she said with a smile of the sweetest satisfaction.

It hardly occurred to her to think of his lack of religious belief. But suppose he did not go by bell, book, and candle? Her brother had spoken of him as a Christian at heart, and he was a good reader of men. She would let that go for the present. Her love for him might yet bring about seeming impossibilities. It did not trouble her at all,—not as much as it should, she thought, more than once.

Mary and Daisy took dinner together. It was decidedly lonesome without the genial face of the head of the house.

Mary had bolstered up the twins, to take his place, she laughingly said ; and, beyond hammering with their forks and calling out their preferences in an unknown tongue, they behaved beautifully. Daisy devoted herself to them, partly that she need not talk, partly to hide the light in her face, which she felt would burst out now and then like a sun-glow ; but in caressing and admiring them, nobody would mind.. Margy stalked round in a gloomier mood than usual ; and more than once Daisy felt the woman's keen eyes searching her face, and was provoked with herself that she could not keep control of her countenance at these times.

" I don't know whether it's a red-letter day or not," said Mary, taking a spoon from one of the twins, who persisted in aiming it at aunt Daisy's eyes. " There, there, my darling," she continued to the angel at her side, " do you want to make dearest aunt Daisy blind, so that she can't see your sweet little face any more for the rest of her natural life ? " and she ended with a hug and a kiss.

" What do you mean by a red-letter day ? " Daisy asked, looking conscious.

" Why, there are three times as many letters to-day as we generally get in the whole week. Only think ! there was one for Margy, the first letter she has ever received, to my knowledge, since she has been with us." —

"A letter for Margy!" Daisy exclaimed. Margy had served the dessert and gone. "I don't wonder you thought it remarkable. I didn't know she had anybody. I thought she was utterly alone in the world."

"So did I," said Mary.

"And when you gave it to her, did it surprise her much?"

"Not in the least. She took it quite as a matter of course, only a bit of red came into her cheeks, and I fancied her eyes snapped a little; but that might have been all fancy, of course."

"And the superscription; was it a good hand? How I wish I could have seen it!" said Daisy.

"A superior hand,—a man's handwriting, I thought," her sister-in-law made reply.

"How I should like to know who it was from!" Daisy said, with so much fervor that Mary caught herself wondering why. "Was it anything like — I mean, did you ever see the writing before?"

"Never," said Mary, laughing. "I can't imagine what makes you so curious about it."

Daisy breathed more freely, and made some light answer. "Such absurd things will come into one's head!" she thought, not even acknowledging to herself what way her suspicion tended, and left the table.

CHAPTER XIX.

A RED-LETTER DAY.

DAISY busied herself with her work, with the babies, practised a little, sewed a little, and all the while her heart was singing. Nor could she disguise her happiness. Every now and then a light flashed over her face, her eyes grew luminous, while she hummed little snatches of her favorite songs. It was all she could do to keep her rebellious joy within bounds.

“Something has happened,” Mary said to herself more than once, as she watched her in a furtive way. “She is not in this mood usually. Some great joy has come into her life.” And then she fell to thinking of how the two came home together, and of Temple’s quiet manner and softened voice, of Daisy’s flushed cheeks and downcast but sparkling eyes; and a quick wonder, coupled with a regret that she could hardly account for, flashed through her consciousness.

“I’ll talk to Arthur about it,” she said to herself, still thinking uneasily. “It never would do in this world, if I read him aright.”

Finally the dusk came, and the lamps were lighted.

Daisy sat down with some knitting, and the pink shade of the lamp softened and partly hid her face. The two women had chosen the study to sit in, where a bright fire blazed on the hearth. It was a bonny, cheerful interior, the brightest in the house in all seasons, but especially so on this evening, Daisy thought.

Mary, with an occasional protest against her husband's absence, sewed on some bit of *lingerie*, now and again scanning Daisy's face.

"I wish either these people lived nearer or wouldn't get sick," she said, after a few moments of silence. "I'm always nervous about accidents at night, and there's no moon. There! how foolish I am to start so!"

Somebody had rung the door-bell. Daisy, half expecting Temple, rose with smiling eyes, when Margy looked in to say that Mrs. St. Albert had come; and presently the little woman was seated in their midst, her wraps thrown aside, her dimples in full play, her eyes and lips in vivacious motion. She generally spoke rapidly and with singular distinctness. It seemed as if vowels and consonants were always ranging themselves round her lips ready to form themselves into line at a moment's notice.

"My adorable Hugh told me that the dominie, so he will call him, wouldn't be back till late to-night; and I left the dear old infant at home all alone by himself, so you must give me credit for being amiable," she said, her face cherubic in its placidity. "I told him that perhaps I should stay all night; but he severely answered, without looking up from his paper, that he should call for me at sharp ten. I wanted him to come with me, but he pleaded business, letters to write, and all that. I suppose that you have found out before this, that the plea of business covers a multitude of sins. Even my angelic husband uses it at times. It is a lame excuse. He wants to sit in his dressing-gown with his feet on the fender. I told him so; but he lent me his deaf ear, and I was glad of it. If there is anything I do despise in married people, it is the retort courteous, sprinkled with 'my dears.' You see, when I talk into his left ear, he always smiles, and that keeps us both in good temper. I'm not like my poor old nurse, who used to quote the Bible to suit her own purpose. 'De good book say smite on de oder cheek; an' bress de good Lord, I allers do.' Instead of smiting the other cheek, I say all sorts of wicked things on his deaf side, and if I don't feel better, he does. It don't harm him, and it does me good."

All this time she was taking some lace-work

from a prim little bag, and presently the three women were comparing notes as to the relative patterns.

"How cosey you always do look here," said Mrs. St. Albert admiringly. "Nothing could be prettier than the flicker of the firelight on the back of the books. I declare, there's nothing so cheerful as a wood fire! Oh! by the way, have you heard that the old mill fell down to-day?"

Mary looked up, but Daisy started and flushed. Her astonished glance rested for a moment on the pretty, placid face before her, as if questioning how much she knew.

"Yes," Mary said. "Daisy was there at the time. She had gone for a walk. Mr. Temple had a narrow escape."

"Mr. Temple! Oh! I didn't hear of that," said Mrs. St. Albert, now all attention. "Do you know, whatever I hear about that man interests me at once? He may be wicked, but he is delightfully interesting, just the same."

"How did you hear about it?" asked Daisy, commanding her face and voice.

"My girl met your girl, who told her the news."

"Margy!" Mary exclaimed, while a little thrill ran through Daisy's frame. "Oh! I remember, she was out this morning. I wonder why she didn't tell me about it!"

“Surely!” said Daisy, her fingers trembling. The next moment it seemed to strike her that the light was too strong, and she moved her chair a little back.

“Then, she didn’t speak of Mr. Temple?” said Mary, after she had narrated the story of his escape.

“No; at least my young lady did not say so. If his name had been mentioned, I think she would have told me.”

Daisy was working herself into a mental fever. To admit that Margy saw the mill fall was equivalent to the belief that the woman had followed her there, and had been in hiding while Temple stood there, a solitary figure in mid-air. What else had she seen? And why was she there at all? What tree could have hidden her? Daisy reviewed all the circumstances, and felt confident, that unless the woman had concealed herself on the other side of the mill, where there were a few rocks large enough for shelter, she should have seen her, or any other figure, however small. Then there was the fact that Margy was home before her. But what but jealousy could prompt her to such an action? It seemed ridiculous even as the thought occurred to her, and she smiled and reddened at it; but still it left a feeling of irritation which she could not shake off. Margy had all at

once become a factor in her life. Disguise it as she would, a singular dread of this woman grew daily in her mind. Could it be possible that in some trouble of her younger life *he* had been her lawyer? Perhaps in some way he had forfeited her good opinion.

This was a happy thought. She laughed at herself as she sat listening to Mrs. St. Albert's chatter, of her family and acquaintances in North Carolina, her tenants, her reminiscences of the old plantation. Her limitations of knowledge respecting the outside world, made her wonder again if she were not narrow in this sudden prejudice against Margy; and she set herself to work to fight against it, to stifle the judgment that might after all be unjust. Was it not rather ridiculous, at all events undignified, to couple this woman in her mind with a man so unique among his kind, a man of such varied attainments, scholarly, professional? It was unworthy of her, and unjust to him.

"My paragon of husbands is coming, I know his step;" and Mrs. St. Albert put up her work.

"*My* paragon should have been here long ago," said Mary, her face expressing the anxiety she could not help feeling, as her visitor gathered her wraps together.

"I'll go up and look at the babies," she added, as she bade her visitor good-night.

"I believe I will go too," said Daisy. "I am tired—do you care about my staying up?"

"Till Arthur comes? Oh, no!" her sister said. "Of course I shall go down-stairs again. You look weary. I have noticed that all the evening."

Daisy meant to retire at once, but Margy had so laid siege to her imagination that she must needs sit down to think about it a little more at her leisure. Then she heard the carriage come to the gate, heard her brother's voice, heard Mary hurrying down to welcome him, and knew that Margy had prepared a hot supper for him, as she always did when he came home late.

"It's not worth while to go down," she said, struggling with her thoughts. Still she sat there, wondering at herself because she did so, yet making no effort to retire.

Down-stairs, the rector came in with a cheery smile, though he looked tired and pale.

"I was obliged to go to Stoketon," he said, "and was the unwilling witness of a long and painful death-struggle."

"Then poor Mr. Boynton is dead," Mary said, the quick tears coming to her eyes, for she had known and loved him. "What a sad house it must be!"

"It is—I don't care to dwell on the recollection," he answered. "Ah, this is home!" he added,

a supreme satisfaction in voice and manner, as he sat down by the fire. "It was a chilly drive, and Boynton clung to me so till the last, I almost fancied he was in the carriage beside me. How good it seems to be back with you!" and he drew his wife tenderly towards him and kissed her.

Presently the folding-doors swung open, and Margy made her appearance, rolling in a little table, set with hot tea, bread and butter, and cold chicken.

"Ah! that's appetizing. The very sight makes me hungry," he said with a cheerful smile. "How good of you, Margy! Now you shall take some tea," he added, turning to his wife, who held out both hands full of letters.

"You know I never eat or drink after early tea, on principle," she said.

"And you know I never read letters when there is food before me, on principle," he laughingly replied, as he took a piece of the chicken. "What a raft of letters! — six, seven, eight, and plenty of begging-letters among them, no doubt. I tell you what you shall do while I eat. Bring up that arm-chair — or stop, I'll do that, then you can be useful and at the same time ornamental, while you open the letters."

Mary broke the envelopes one after the other, peering into some, reading others, till she came to

the last one, which was sealed with black, and which for a reason she had withheld, for fear it contained bad news. Opening this very slowly, she ran her eye over the page.

"O Arthur!" she exclaimed, "your great-aunt Priscilla Luther is dead!"

"Aunt Priscilla!" he laid down his knife and fork. "I think she was past ninety. She has attained a ripe age. Well," at his wife's cry of astonishment, "what follows?"

"O Arthur! it follows that she has left all her money to Daisy, and all her silver to you!"

He turned round, his appetite satisfied.

"To Daisy!" he said, a quick light irradiating his face. "Well, I am glad of that. And how much is the all?"

"Fifteen thousand dollars in money," said Mary, reading slowly.

"We ought to be very thankful,—glad and thankful," he said. "I have always been anxious as to Daisy's future. Now she is provided for. Fifteen thousand dollars is a large sum for a young girl. I must look after it, or she will be for giving it all away, she is such a generous little soul. Where is she? The news will keep till morning anyway, but I'd like to see how she looks over it to-night."

Mary ran to the foot of the stairs.

“Daisy!” she called.

The girl rose in a hurry, laughing to think she had not yet taken a pin out of her attire.

“Well, what is it?” she answered.

“Some good news. Come down.”

CHAPTER XX.

HOW DAISY RECEIVED THE NEWS.

"COME here, my pet," said her brother, who was comfortably ensconced in the great study easy-chair, looking the picture of contentment, the firelight playing on his dressing-gown, and red and black smoking-cap.

Daisy went forward, wondering. Something in his face made her pulses beat a little faster. Mary stood by, regarding her with an indulgent smile. "Had he seen Mr. Temple?" she asked herself.

"We have a letter from the old homestead, dear," her brother said, as she sat down on the cushioned side of the big chair, and he threw his arm about her. "I don't know as you remember your great-aunt Priscilla."

"Oh! indeed I do, that little withered old lady, oh, so old! with the silver-white hair, and the tiny red spots on her cheeks. She was so pretty," said Daisy.

"That is she to a dot," said the rector. "Well, my dear, she is dead."

"Oh! poor great-aunt Priscilla!" said Daisy, her face shadowed at once.

"No; rich aunt Priscilla. After over ninety years of a happy life here, she has gone to join all her dear ones in a happier home. But, my pet, I haven't told you all. She has left you fifteen thousand dollars."

"Oh!" Daisy lifted herself from the chair, her eyes widening, and stood wondering, struck dumb for the moment. "Why didn't she leave it to you?" were the first words she spoke, her voice regretful.

"Because she knew that you needed it most, little girl," he said, smiling. "I am glad it came to you — but you don't look glad."

"The boys — you need it for them," said Daisy.

"The boys will be cared for, my dear; uncle Ronald has assured me of that, if they live. If they don't, why, their inheritance is still more sure."

"I ought to be delighted," said Daisy, "but I am so startled! Fifteen thousand dollars! and all mine!"

"Every cent of it, and a snug little sum it is," mused the rector. "It will at least keep you from going out into the world to face its frowns and disappointments. I think you could live very well on the interest of that money, Daisy."

"Yes, but still it seems as if you ought to have it, half of it, at least."

"I don't want half, no, nor a fourth of it, you generous little soul. I know you mean all you say, and you are very good; but you are to have every cent of it yourself. I shall consult with Mr. Temple about the matter at once. He will know how to invest it in the safest way."

"Oh, don't tell him!" Daisy half-gasped, and then stood flushed and nervous, ready to bite her tongue out for having spoken.

"Why shouldn't I tell him?" the rector asked gravely. "He is the best legal and business man I know, and I must consult somebody."

"I meant — I thought there were business men in the church, Mr. St. Albert, for instance — but do as you please," said Daisy. "Of course I have nothing to say in the matter."

"You have everything to say, my dear," was the response. Mary had moved towards the window, and was pulling at the shades a little nervously.

"There *is* something between them," she said to herself, — "and she loves Temple."

"However," the rector was saying, "I will take counsel of my own judgment first, and sleep on it. You will be glad to know that all the silver comes to me. There is a great deal too. Mary

will not have to worry over her small stock of silver spoons ; for, if I remember right, there are dozens and dozens, both large and small, to say nothing of a service or two, an urn and some old tankards. I consider myself very well remembered ; so, pussy, go to bed and dream over the good news."

Daisy threw both arms over her brother's neck, and kissed him.

"What in the world was the child crying for ?" the rector asked of his wife. "I felt her tears on my cheek."

"Why, for joy, of course," said the wary little wife, and kept her thoughts to herself.

As for Daisy, when she gained her room she sat down and wiped the tears from her lashes. Mary came up in a few minutes.

"I'm sure I don't know what I'm crying for," she murmured, "but what a day it has been ! And now comes this strangest news of all. It is like a fairy story. I had almost forgotten poor dear aunt Priscilla. It is most ungrateful to say so, but I had. But then, she never came into my life ; only when I was a little girl with big eyes and long curls, my mother used to take me to see her, and I remember I was very much in awe of her till she gave me seed-cakes on a gilt dish. And once we stayed to tea, and ate off a table that

she said had belonged to Marie Antoinette. Her mother had brought it to America. Everything there looked ancient. Who would have thought she would remember me? I do hope she sees that I am grateful."

Then she sat very still, trying to realize that she had money now in her own right. Delightful visions, but half defined as yet, came dancing before her mind's eye. What she could do for the twins now! for Margy's little girl, over-weighted with that kind of genius which is akin to insanity in some temperaments, and which, if not rightly guided by the mind and hand of a master, sends its possessor adrift on the shoals and quicksands of ruin.

"And now I can go to Washington, and buy me all the fine things I need. I will never look shabby again if I can help it. How like a dream it seems; but, oh, how beautiful!"

And so she mused till the clock striking the hour of midnight roused her from her reverie.

"I am too happy to sleep," she murmured, as she laid her head on the pillow, and smiling eyes and parted lips attested to the fact.

Morning found her as alert and vigorous as ever. Youth can bear the sleepless vigils of joy, and Daisy's cup was full to the brim. She hoped to see Temple that morning. At breakfast she was

curiously conscious of being watched by a pair of sombre brown eyes, of being waited on with something more of deference than usual by Margy, and yet she felt uncomfortable. There was something contagious in the gloom of the woman's face, something that made Daisy uneasy.

"Was Temple here yesterday?" the rector asked, and then the story of the accident was rehearsed again. Daisy felt the hot glow of her heart spread to her cheeks, conscious of Margy's knowledge of the fact.

"Well, I'm glad the old trap is down. It was an eyesore; and Temple proved himself equal to the occasion, as he always does. He is a grand man, that!"

Daisy gave him a smiling, sympathetic glance that was quite lost on him; but Mary was watching her, and she said to herself, "How that girl loves him! *I must speak to Arthur!*"

There was to be a meeting of the vestry at noon; and the rector gave orders, that, as it must of necessity be at lunch-time, refreshments were to be served in the dining-room. He was never so happy as when catering to the comfort of his friends.

Coming into the study while Daisy was going over the backs of the books with a mammoth feather-duster, he gravely put his arm about her.

"Little one," he said, "you spoiled a man's fortune the day you got your own."

She looked up at him with inquiring eyes. In her great joy she had forgotten the one unhappy episode of that otherwise golden day.

"Rush Severn was in the church-study with me early this morning," he said.

"Oh! I am — so sorry!" she stammered.

"So am I," he said softly. "The man has a fine nature, and feels a deep and loving interest in his profession. He is badly hurt, poor fellow! I tried to comfort him, but I am too sympathetic. I fear I only made him feel worse. He is very manly, though. He does not blame you because you cannot love him. I have hoped that you could."

"Will he leave?" Daisy asked, with a half-ashamed, half-eager manner.

"He wanted to resign at once, but I think I convinced him that it was not the best thing to do. He will go away for a time, however, and has consented to procure a substitute for two or three months. I like the young man. He is very brave, though I could see that his suffering is intense. I know you could not trifle with him, but I did fancy you liked him, at one time."

"I like him now. I shall always like him, but — I never loved him — I never could."

"Never is a long word, little one; but I suppose you have fathomed its meaning. I see Temple coming up the walk."

"Oh! let me go! let me go!" said Daisy, her face scarlet; and she ran from the room, leaving her brother looking after her in a dazed way.

CHAPTER XXI.

TEMPLE ASKS FOR DAISY.

"WELL, what does that mean?" he said to himself, as Temple entered the study, let in, as usual, by Zue.

The two men shook hands. The rector's face was still puzzled.

"Prince," said Temple, "you will think, perhaps, that I am here on a strange errand, when I tell you why I have come. I know you have but little time on a Saturday, and therefore come to the point at once. I love your sister. I love her devotedly. For the first time in my life I am in bonds. Have I your consent to win her?"

He stood erect, stately, handsome, a fine model of a man, as the rector said to himself, a glow in the dark face that lighted and even spiritualized the whole countenance.

"You love Daisy, my little Daisy!" the rector said, quietly, gravely. "Ah!" he drew a long breath, "I am enlightened at last. And she?" he looked steadily in Temple's face, a question in his eyes.

"Unworthy as I am of such a blessing, she has confessed that she loves me. I wish you to understand, however, that nothing of a clandestine character has been going on under your roof. I never spoke to Miss Daisy until yesterday, when, after a moment of extreme peril — you have doubtless heard of my escape — she expressed so kindly a sympathy that it emboldened me to tell her of my love. The rest followed."

The rector was silent for a moment. With glance downcast, and not a little tumult of soul, for it seemed as if another burden had been added to his many cares, so little prepared was he to hear such news, he pondered upon this undreamed-of fact of Daisy's love for the man who stood before him.

"I could have wished," he said, at last, "that your beliefs, at least, were more in accordance with hers and my own."

"Yes," said the other, "I anticipated that remark. But who knows what love may win for me?"

"Well, we won't discuss theology just now," said the rector smilingly. "I have every confidence in you, Temple, because, though the head is somewhat wrong in my estimation, the heart is right. And if Daisy loves you, that is enough. I am sure you can make her happy, only — but here

come my vestrymen, and — of course, the subject must drop right here. God bless you, my friend, and bring you more fully to the light ! ”

“ But I have much to say ; in fact, something to confess. I wish to be frank with you. There is a dark page in the history of my life which I must tell you before this goes any further, and in two hours from now I leave Fairstock for a somewhat protracted stay.”

The rector breathed more freely.

“ Well, we can wait,” he said, as several gentlemen came up the walk. “ Of course you will leave matters as they are till we meet again. There must be no engagement for the present.”

“ I promise you I will leave Daisy as free as air.”

“ That is all I ask. You will find my sister in the room beyond. Good-by ; and, again, God bless you ! ”

Temple went into the room designated. It was all in shadow. Daisy had drawn the curtains together, and sat, shy and uncomfortable, in a corner of the great lounge, her face very white, and her beautiful eyes preternaturally large and bright.

“ Why, you are in the dark ! ” said Temple, with a man’s thoughtlessness, drawing the curtains asunder, the light disclosing Daisy’s now blushing face. “ My darling,” he went on, “ I must gloat

over you for a few moments with all the passion a miser would over his gold. I am leaving town."

"So soon!" and both Daisy's hands were prisoned in his strong grasp. He stooped as if to kiss her, but she drew back with a half-frightened reserve, and he desisted. Then he sat down by her side.

"Yes, dear, I must be in New York to-night. I tried to put off the evil hour, but the last message was imperative. I am obliged to go on most important business. May I write to you? O Daisy! I can't realize my great happiness. Your sweet face is with me always. When I awoke this morning, it was heaven. My beautiful darling, you shall never regret having given your love to me."

"I do not regret. I cannot regret," she murmured. "Did you see my brother? Did — you — tell him?"

"Yes, I saw him; I told him. He was nobly good, marvellously kind, like his glorious self. He is my ideal of a Christian clergyman. I hold him as a model — I reverence him. You hear this from the lips of a man the world calls infidel — for to you I may confess my most secret thoughts. His magnetism strengthens me, his charity binds me to him with bands as strong as steel; and what, dear love, may not you do? Daisy, you see

before you a man who despises all shams, but who is truly striving to reach the highest pinnacle of both greatness and goodness. Your brother has stormed the outworks of the citadel. He has turned my thoughts into a new channel. You will have access to the innermost parts of the fortress, not by force of discussion and worn-out arguments, but by that great conqueror and leveller—love. That is all I ask, Daisy: love me, for I have never had any love in my life. My mother died when I was an infant; my father, when I was only ten years old. I had neither brother nor sister, only an uncle, who brought me up. I have always been so lonesome, and have borne the brunt of so much that was unusual and even unnatural, that I wonder I do not hate all mankind. Daisy, you will make up to me for all that."

"I will, if it be possible," said Daisy, her eyes shining through tears, her hands outstretched, and this time she did not refuse him her lips.

An hour later the dishes rattled in the dining-room, the laugh and jest went round. A question of vital importance had been settled, and the rector and his vestry were in harmony.

Daisy heard them, but she still sat silent and alone in the corner of the great lounge, her eyes closed, a radiance in her face that seemed scarcely

of earth. Too happy to move, in a sort of semi-trance, she sat there till called to earth by Mary's imperative voice. Then she started to her feet, and saw her sister-in-law, pale and anxious.

"I've been looking for you everywhere," the latter said. "You and I must go into the kitchen, for Margy has hurt herself."

"Margy! Why, what has happened?" asked Daisy, roused to a painful sense of every-day life, as she came out of the shadow.

"Before Arthur went out with his vestry," Mary made reply, "he found a moment to run upstairs,—wanted a button sewed on, of course. Margy was in my room fixing the sewing-machine for me. Arthur didn't see her, and he told me Temple had been here, and had asked him for you. O Daisy! Daisy! I never had anything upset me so. 'He is dead in love,' said Arthur, 'and honest enough about it, but I won't have any engagement, and I told him so. I've got to know more about the man.' With that there was a scream, and there was Margy absolutely in a dead faint. I had all I could do to bring her to. 'What in the world made you faint?' I asked her. 'The presser came down on my finger,' she said; and sure enough, her finger was almost flat. I don't wonder she fainted. I sent her to her room, and just now, going up there, found her on the bed, sobbing her

heart out. Now, would flattening her finger on the machine make her do all that? a strong, sensible woman like Margy? I don't know what has come over her of late. She seems morose and unhappy; haven't you noticed it? I told her just to stay there if she was suffering so much. So I came down to find you. We shall have to put on our kitchen-aprons and attend to the baking. Luckily the babies are asleep."

"I'll be with you in a minute," said Daisy, and ran up-stairs for an apron. On the first landing she met Margy coming down-stairs, her face as white as a sheet.

"Why, Margy," she said, "I'm sorry you hurt yourself. Why didn't you stay up-stairs? Mary and I were going to finish the baking."

The woman paused, and looked at her with a strange, wild stare.

"Oh, Miss Daisy!" she said, as if with an effort, then stopped. A little color came into her cheeks. "I'm better now," she added, in a constrained voice, losing the anxious, questioning look. "I can get on very well with the baking. Fortunately it's my left hand;" and down she went, briskly, leaving Daisy standing looking after her.

"What should make her so clumsy all at once, I wonder?" she mused. "Arthur was telling of

that interview with Temple. I do wish he had held his tongue. Of course, he didn't know she was there. It's always that,—the sight of him, the mention of his name. What can it be?"

Mary came up and into her room in a few moments.

"It's all right," she said with a sigh of relief. "I'm glad enough to get out of the kitchen. Margy has spoiled me. But, Daisy, do you know I am astonished, overpowered, in fact, by this news? Can it be possible that you have accepted Mr. Temple for a lover? Consider, child, he is years older than you are. In a little while he will be venerable."

"Do you think I care, if only he loves me?" Daisy asked, with shining eyes.

"Then you do love him?"

"I'll tell you, Mary." She sat down by the side of her sister-in-law. "I loved him almost the first time I saw him. There's brazeness for you!" and down goes the bright head on Mary's shoulder.

"Why, Daisy, you are crying!" her sister-in-law says, presently.

"I — can't — help it — I'm so — so — hap — happy!" is the sobbing reply.

"Well, Daisy, I must say that you are an enigma. Crying because you were unhappy yes-

terday; to-day, crying because you are happy. Sly little puss you have been, too."

"No, not a bit sly, for I never thought he cared for me, till within a day or two. That awful leap he took! It was my fright and my joy, all together, that made him speak; and, oh, Mary!" — down went her head again, while Mary patted the pretty locks, smiling serenely.

"Well, it can't be helped, — and he is Arthur's friend," she went on ramblingly. "I suppose I ought to wish you joy, for that and your good luck. The fifteen thousand dollars come in so beautifully. But Arthur objects to an engagement."

"So does Mr. Temple. We shall never be engaged," said Daisy simply.

"What!" and Mary's face took on an expression of bewilderment.

"I mean in the ordinary way. He don't believe in engagement-rings, and neither do I. Some time or other, we shall — just get married, that's all."

"What a heathenish idea!" Mary exclaimed. "I think engagements are lovely! These very superior men are always full of whims and oddities. But I won't tease you, child. I'm sure I wish you all manner of happiness, though I confess, I can't understand how you can prefer Temple to

Rush Severn. I will acknowledge that he is exceedingly handsome, learned, and all that."

"What do you suppose he saw in poor little me to fall in love with?" Daisy asks, turning towards the mirror. "Not beauty, certainly."

"How modest we are!" laughed Mary. "I'll tell you what he saw,—a dear, bewitching little girl, with the sort of good looks very few people have, without vanity, and as clever as need be. As for your mental gifts, they are more than fair, and your voice is matchless. Oh! you needn't think you have the best of the bargain, and fall down and worship him, as most girls do. He is a very lucky man if he gets you, I can tell him. It isn't every young lady who can sing Beethoven's 'Adelaide,' construe Latin and Hebrew, and make delicious bread."

Daisy was lost in contemplation. Her lips smiled at the compliment, but her eyes had a far-away look, as she said a moment after,—

"And only think, Mary, I am the first woman he has ever loved!"

Outwardly Mary acquiesced with the spirit of this little outburst, by a simple nod. Inwardly she said,—

"He never could have made *me* believe that, and he thirty-five years old at the least;" but she would say nothing to shake Daisy's beautiful

faith. She really had very little sympathy in regard to the prospective alliance.

A blind kind of admiration for the man's intellectual attainments, and a horror of his supposed tenets, were mingled in her mind with the respect she felt for one of her husband's friends. But he was too dark, reserved, silent, in her presence, and, most heinous fault of all, he never had taken any special notice of the twins. It was not in her mother's nature to overlook such a grave lack of appreciation as this, and she even augured ill for Daisy's future in this supposed dislike for children. The fact was, that Temple was really fond of children, but regarding them as small savages, very apt to turn upon their admirers, he was proportionately afraid of them while in the state of infantile adolescence, and very seldom noticed them except by stealth.

"The dear little fellows are awake," said Mary, giving Daisy's hand a final pat, and hurried from the room, leaving that innocent young creature in the first heaven of her bliss.

CHAPTER XXII.

MARGY WRITES.

WHAT shall I say? I am all in a horror of tumult and apprehension. When I went out that day — was it only yesterday? — I felt that I should solve some mystery, Miss Daisy looked so pale and anxious. The professor had been here, and gone with that written in his face I should not care to read. Of course he loves her! I have always seen that; and, oh! unfortunate girl! why could she not have loved him?

How is it, that, with the best motives in the world, we all go wrong? Zue is wilful and capricious as she can be, and gives me no comfort because she seems to have inherited all the evil in her father's nature, along with his many gifts.

And as I have no patience with her, and at times but little love, regarding her as I do, as his unworthy image, I can make nothing of her. Miss Daisy can influence her, but of late seems to care but little for the child.

Well, let that pass. I must turn to other matters.

I saw the wall of the old mill fall down. As I crouched there in the shadow of a rock, as *his* figure stood swaying in the air, I clasped my hands and prayed — yes, I was wicked enough to pray that he might fall and be killed. It was a bitter prayer, but God knows his death would have made life easier for us all. The man I scorn and loathe and once loved, was too much for fate, however. He leaped, and while I looked to see him land on the rocks or in the river, he cleared them both. I looked steadily, I never closed my eyes. I wanted to see and be sure of his utter failure, and instead, I witnessed his triumph. It was grandly done. I could not have believed it would be, and I was left to battle with doubt and terror.

If I could only go away and hide myself and my child! But I cannot. I should be dragged from my hiding-place and branded with disgrace. I should deceive the best man and the sweetest woman that God ever made. No, I can't do that. I must face the inevitable, some time, some way. God give me courage! When the hour comes, I only pray for strength to do my whole duty. *It should be done now*; but they are not engaged — and he has gone away. I will wait a little longer.

I am oppressed with a sense of horror from morning till night. When I heard from Mr. Prince this morning that *he* had won that pure

young heart, I thought I should go mad for a moment. Well it was that the presser came down on my finger, and the torture forced me to scream. I should have screamed anyway, the news was so horrible, knowing what I know — knowing also that he is strong and I am weak — that he would probably deny everything, and, as he is a lawyer, bring proof against proof. Oh, no! I must be careful and watch my opportunity.

Thank God, the rector is wise! He has not yet given his consent.

"We must wait till we know him better," he said. Yes, you shall know him, know his vanity, his recklessness, his cruelty. You shall know him by following the map on my heart, which long ago, long ago, beat so fondly and truly for him.

And, oh, the sadness of it! She loves him! Haven't I seen her tremble when he spoke to her at the table? Haven't I read the adoration in her glances?

Am I jealous?

Is it *that* that makes it so easy to read their very thoughts?

If so, I hate myself for it, hate myself that his image comes to me in my dreams so that I cry out with pain, so that I wake up and walk and walk, to change the current of my thoughts.

I look at my child and say, "This man who has

made himself so famous, whom men bow down to and women love, is your father!" And then, poor soul, I feel a certain hatred towards her because she *is* his child!

Sometimes come darker thoughts. The easiest way to end it all is to die. Shall I ever have the courage to face this awful responsibility? The torture is almost more than I can bear, the torture of thought, of uncertainty, of the fear of what the consequences may be.

And all because he is changed, and rich and great, and has been going forward, while I have been going backward. They may think I am mercenary; but, as Heaven hears me, I would not take a cent from him if I were starving. Neither should the child.

Some three weeks ago I had almost come to a decision to leave this place. In the midst of my anxieties, the face of my father suddenly rose before me. I was seized with a yearning to find out whether he was living or dead. More than ten years have passed since I last saw him. Was he in the same old parsonage? How could I learn? Then it occurred to me to write to a Mrs. Austin, one of his parishioners, a woman who had been foremost in every good work, and a great friend of my mother. I would write her as being an old acquaintance of the rector, and so learn of his present standing.

I accordingly wrote the letter, and carried it to the post-office myself. On the threshold I started back. *He* was there waiting for letters and papers. He looked at me, too, squarely in the face, but nothing followed the glance. Stone itself could not have been calmer. Well, to be sure, I must be changed ; but not so changed that he can have forgotten me. No, no ; in his guilty soul there must be some memory of the woman he so basely deserted.

I waited outside till he had gone, furious at myself for having challenged his memory.

There is, then, no need of disguise. I am blotted out of his mind as of his life.

I sent my letter.

Yesterday an answer came, and in these words :

MY DEAR MADAM,—The clergyman you inquire about is still living, though not at the present time in this parish. About five years ago he contracted marriage with Mrs. Ablethwaite, a very rich widow, whose husband had been dead two years. Being decidedly a woman of ambitious tendencies, she began at once to find new fields to conquer. Under her administration the rector became an entirely different man in every particular. He changed the fashion of his dress, even to his robes ; and instead of the old formalist who droned through his long sermon, he became animated, gave us shorter discourses, and sought out new acquaintances. One year ago he was called to a city church, St. Stephen's, of New York, and accepted. He

has, I am told, a large and fashionable congregation, and he and his wife are very popular. As you seem to have known the family here at Welby Corners, can you tell me the whereabouts of the rector's daughter, who left her home some ten or more years ago, and never returned? I remember her as a light-hearted, neglected girl, for whom, after her mother's death, her father seemed to have no fondness; but I fear that she has many times repented of her flight. At the time of her disappearance her father was very ill; and when he had nearly recovered, the news of her leaving school set him back again, and for a time his life was despaired of. He was very fond of his one child, though so quiet and cold in manner, and would at any time have welcomed her back with open arms. I sincerely hope that she has not suffered for her thoughtlessness; but how many of us escape the consequences of our own wrongdoing?

It was evident to me that the writer more than half suspected that the clergyman's daughter was the writer of the letter.

So, my father had been married for years, and to a woman I had never liked. How well I remembered little Rose Ablethwaite, one of my school-mates! Now my father called her daughter, while I was denied that privilege. But, as the letter said, I have only myself to blame. My life has been a mistake. At every step I have gone farther from hope and home. Shall I ever behold my father's face again? And, after all, he did care for me. Oh! why did he not show me some

tenderness? I could have loved him so dearly!
But I thought he disliked me.

I can hardly realize the fact that my cold, pale, stern father is popular. This woman, his present wife, has worked wonders. My father the rector of a city church! His neglected child the drudge, though Heaven knows a willing one, in the house of a brother clergyman, herself burdened with a young life that she can neither conquer nor control, tortured by questions she cannot answer, half crazed by circumstances which threaten her peace of mind, and the honor of those she loves. Was ever a poor soul so cruelly tried?

And my father is a popular city clergyman!

CHAPTER XXIII.

A ROYAL WELCOME.

WHEN Andrew Temple left the rectory, his every thought was a protest against fate.

To leave just now, when fortune for the first time in his life had smiled upon him, and without the expected though dreaded interview with the rector, was a kind of torture. Success he had experienced, but not of this sort. Woman's love had ever seemed as far beyond his hopes as the glittering stars beyond his reach. In many fashionable assemblies he had been the honored guest. Women in society had smiled upon him, but never yet had their smiles touched his heart. He had formed his ideal, as most men do. The coming woman was not a prodigy of beauty, neither remarkably witty nor wealthy, but good and pure. With what utter devotion, when he should be so blessed as to find her, would he mould his wishes, his very thoughts, to the delightful task of making her life a happy one ! To look forward to a home of his own was like a glimpse of Paradise to the man

who had never known the real meaning of the word. And he never had. His uncle had adopted him when he was ten years old. The domestic lares and penates were sacrificed by this man on the altar of business. His wife, a thin, stooping, creature, who had been remarkably beautiful in her youth, dismayed and distracted by the loss of three children in as many weeks, had never recovered from the shock. Andrew remembered her as always moving to and fro, with an expression of unutterable sadness in her hollow eyes, and himself as always pitying her. His uncle had hoped much for his wife from this adoption of his nephew, but nothing came of it. She was kind to him, but he never took the place of her children. Forced to forego all evidence of tenderness on her part, his heart retreated within its citadel, and almost lost the faculty of loving. Day after day, month after month, year after year, he saw the same dreary hearthstone, which, to his uncle as well as himself, was a mockery of the real thing; and it was a wonder that his nature did not grow sordid and base in so unreal an atmosphere.

Then came a time of anguish and misery, a turning of his whole soul toward the attempt to right a wrong. No chance for thought of love now; scarcely time for friendship. From the age of fifteen to twenty-five he was a slave, working

always under a burning sense of shame. His uncle and aunt were both dead then, and he had no one to depend upon but himself. Genius set him apart as a man to be looked up to, as the wisest and brightest among his peers. The free utterance of his thoughts made him loved at times, at times feared. He was aggressive in many ways at the time he met Arthur Prince. The two men were alike in more than one characteristic, and a mutual affection sprung up between them. Seeing the exceptional beauty and purity of the rector's life, and yet his freedom from certain restraints of dogma, made the friendship complete.

When he first saw Daisy, she looked like a child to him. She sat in the rectory-study, a book in her hands,—delicate blue-veined hands, perfect in every detail,—and simply smiled and bowed as her brother mentioned Temple's name. Then, sitting aside, she watched the two men as they entered into a war of words, and saw that in the face of the stranger that set her young soul in a tumult at once.

Some authority was needed to prove a disputed sentence in Latin. Quite naturally the rector turned to Daisy with the question,—

“Do *you* remember, Daisy?”

“Yes; and I think Mr. Temple is right,” she answered simply, a musical vibration in her full,

soft tones. "But I can get it for you at once. I know where it is."

"The little one understands Latin, then," said Andrew Temple, as Daisy left the room.

"Oh, yes ! reads it better than I do," the rector answered, laughing. "I always go to her when I find myself in a tight place, either in Latin or Hebrew."

"What ! a woman read Hebrew ? A young girl like that ! She must be a monster of erudition," said Temple, astonished.

"Oh, no ! simply she learns the languages readily; has a gift that way. She studied Hebrew when only twelve or thirteen, at home, and absolutely outstripped me, as she has in Latin. She has no genius that I know of, only she is remarkably able. But in singing ! there, I grant you, she excels. If she wished for a public career, I have no doubt she could attain to eminence as a musical celebrity. I have seldom heard so singularly clear and pure a voice."

Just at that moment Daisy came in, a book in one hand, a kitten with its paw bandaged in the other.

"There, you'll find it as I said, and Mr. Temple was right," giving a shy look at the stranger, who was already glowing at the thought of her singular attainments. "And, O Arthur !" she went on,

"how could you leave the mouse-trap on the floor? Poor little Lapwing has got her foot torn, and I expect she is suffering tortures."

Then, as her brother made a lame and laughing excuse, she retreated to her chair, fondling the kitten, her heart beating more quickly than usual, for the bewildering, magnetic eyes that looked into her own were lambent with an expression she could not understand, yet which, nevertheless, affected her with a nameless rapture.

From that day on, the great lawyer took but furtive notice of the young girl, and, save that his eyes and manner in her presence would tell tales, but very little communication passed between them. The child, however, became the woman at once, in his eyes; the woman with the child's pure heart, slight figure, and sweet consciousness. Then when he heard her voice, the mystic chain was forged, the charm completed.

Never in all his life had he listened to singing that equalled hers. He could compare it to nothing but the notes of a nightingale which he had once heard, notes that, in Moore's remembered words,—

"Fall as soft as snow on the sea,
And melt in the heart as instantly."

The more he studied this, to him, unique personification of maidenhood, strong without self-

assertion, learned without pedantry, with a child's thorough enjoyment in all rational pleasures, and yet never so happy as when at home, the more hopelessly he became entangled in the meshes of love Daisy had so unconsciously woven about his imagination.

To tear himself from such a creature just as he had come into possession of the kingdom of her heart, was to leave hope and happiness behind him. And yet her sweet, clear eyes looked at him through the darkness. Was she not his, for all time? for all eternity, by the declaration of her own will? Why followed upon his ecstasy that thrill that to some temperaments presages trouble or loss?

As the iron wheels rolled on, the thoughts that had formed like dark clouds over the horizon of his happiness cleared away.

On the second day of his journey he made himself as comfortable as possible with his railway-rug, and began to think of the future. The scarlet fires of great manufacturing districts belched through the gloom as night came on. Red and yellow forge-flames overlaid the darkness, and threw lurid colors on the banks, danceng grotesquely after rock, tree, and field. His fellow-passengers amused themselves in various ways.

"It makes my very soul sick," he had said at

times in his previous experiences; "to see two fools billing and cooing in public." And here were two fools just in front of him, newly wedded, whom he found himself watching with little throbs of envy.

"Perhaps I should be a greater fool than either of them," he muttered with a shrug and a scowl, as he pulled himself together, and the image of Daisy came before him. "Well, I will bide my time."

It was nearing ten o'clock when the cars rattled into the depot at his destination. He gathered his effects together and went out into the little, well-lighted world, beyond the platform, where friend met friend, and the prospect of home looked sweet indeed to many a weary traveller.

"Here we are!" shouted a jolly voice. "Welcome! welcome!" and not only one but several pairs of hands were extended towards him.

"The matter is settled," said a man taller and graver-looking than the others. "Andrew Temple, let me congratulate you. You are a senator of the United States. Come on, there is a carriage here, and you are to meet a dozen or so of your friends at Willard's. We have been waiting some hours — the train is behind time. Did you know it?"

"No," said Temple, moving forward with the

crowd, "I never thought of it. The fact is -- I — was" — he stopped awkwardly.

"Thinking of some thing or some one else, eh?" asked a short, moon-faced man, dressed in a suit of blue, as he slapped him on the shoulder. "Well, I don't wonder. Such success as yours is calculated to turn a man's head."

They found the carriage in waiting. Driving at once to the hotel, they were soon in possession of a private *suite* of rooms, and Temple went to his own apartment to wash off the dust of travel.

One by one the friends of the new senator arrived, and were shown into the parlor adjoining the private dining-room. Temple was greeted with almost boisterous welcome when he made his appearance, and surrounded at once by his admirers. It was plainly to be seen that he held the hearts of men in his hands, as they crowded about him, wishing him joy of his laurels, and predicting all manner of success.

"My sister Eleanor wished me to offer you her congratulations," said a tall, good-looking young man, to whom he had just been introduced, and who was dressed with exquisite taste. "Do you remember Miss Eleanor Lyttleton, whom you met several times in New York? She has been devouring the newspapers of late with reference to a certain gentleman by the name of Temple, and

was, of course, delighted when she read your name as the successful candidate for M—'s seat in the Senate. Do you remember her?"

"I do, indeed," said Temple.

"She expects you to call," resumed the young man. "Perhaps you'll come to her 'tea' to-morrow. Pray, say yes. Eleanor is a great lion-lover, and, as a matter of course, wishes"—

"To have the first look at the beast?" interrogated Temple, laughing.

"The royal beast," the other replied, "whose success has made him the king among lions. What shall I tell her?"

"Say to your sister, Miss Eleanor, that I accept her invitation with great pleasure, and shall avail myself of the opportunity to take tea with her, to-morrow," said the lion.

"I am sure she will be delighted," was the response. "And now about the election. It's a tremendous honor, at your age. Very little political backing too; nothing very extravagant in the way of money. It shows in what high estimation your hosts of friends hold you."

"To whom I shall hope in due time to make my acknowledgments," said Temple, as his friends led the way to the dining-room.

The dinner through, speeches and toasts were in order. Many bright sayings were evolved through

the mist of smoke and the fumes of wine. Around Andrew Temple's plate were grouped five or six wineglasses, which he had not allowed to be turned up. They all knew, convivial as they were, that their senator never touched wine, but they also knew that he never interfered with the likes and dislikes of his friends.

He was conversing with his new acquaintance, when the latter happened to mention the name of Arthur Princee.

"Do you mean Prince of Fairstock?" asked Temple. "I left him only a day or two ago."

"Do you know him? Have you been there?" the young man asked.

"Oh, yes; I know the family very well," Andrew replied, a thrill of something besides remembrance running through his frame, while, with a quick shock of happiness, he thought of Daisy.

"Then you have met my cousin Daisy?" was young Lyttleton's rejoinder.

"Your cousin!" It was Temple's turn to be astonished. He caught his breath as he spoke.

"My cousin. Occasionally my sister writes to her, and we have been very anxious to have a visit from her. At least my sister has. All girls are bores to me," he added languidly.

Bores—Daisy a bore! Temple sat for a moment like one dazed. He had met Eleanor Lyttle

ton at the house of some New York friends. Her brother he had never seen till now; but he liked him, though Everard amused him with his affectations. Eleanor, he remembered, though a society belle, had sweet, womanly ways; and now it came to him that the cousins were not unlike. Eleanor was a trifle taller and much statelier than Daisy, and, having been out some two or three seasons, had acquired a marvellous manner, and a fluency of speech that made her seem older than her years. Yet they had the same blue eyes, the same delicacy of feature, the same outline of figure. At once he was anxious to meet the cousin of his beloved; and, as soon as he could in courtesy, he took leave of his company, and retired to the privacy of his room, there to reflect upon this, to him, exceptional news, and get some little rest to fortify him for what the morrow had in store.

Lyttleton left him at the door of his room, promising to call for him in time on the following day.

CHAPTER XXIV.

COUSIN ELEANOR.

MOTHER and step-daughter sat together in the sitting-room of one of the finest and costliest houses in Washington. There was but the difference of ten years between the two women, Eleanor being but twenty-one, though she seemed older than her years. By strangers they were generally taken for sisters ; and, indeed, they did not look unlike.

Five years after the death of his first wife, Banker Lyttleton married the niece of an ex-governor of one of the Eastern States, a very beautiful girl of twenty. She proved to be an excellent wife, and made herself so attractive that she soon won the hearts of his two children. A woman of the world, she was fond of society, trained in all its exactions and requirements, of fine tact, perfect manners, and always dressed with exquisite taste.

Tall and stately, with a sweet, low voice, quick to divine the thoughts of others, she had been an

invaluable aid to Eleanor, who was guided by her in all things. With a shrewdness that did her credit, she managed both the brother and sister, bringing them always to her way of thinking, without coercion, whatever their previous opinions might have been.

The room in which they sat was rich with lustrous hangings, the gleam of statuary, pictures and *bric-à-brac*. All that could make a wealthy banker's home attractive was there, and the faultless taste of the mistress of the house left nothing in its arrangements to be desired.

"Mr. Temple has accepted our invitation to tea. Only think, we shall have him here first!" said Eleanor, as she comfortably established her feet on a low ottoman, and took from the dainty silken bag on her arm some fleecy wool-work with which her slim white fingers were soon busily engaged.

"I shall like to meet him," Mrs. Lyttleton made quiet reply. "You know he is an utter stranger to me. Where did you first become acquainted with him, Eleanor?"

She laid her book down as she spoke, and turned her head and her finely outlined throat, that was one of her greatest attractions, as she looked towards Eleanor.

"In New York, at cousin Harry Lind's. I saw

him then, several times ; but he was only a rising man, though thought to be famous in his profession, I believe. He is not a lady's man in any sense of the word, but he was quite attentive to me."

"However insignificant or crude he might appear," said Mrs. Lyttleton, "to the world at large, remember that now he is a United States Senator. Such men are worth knowing."

"Oh! I'm not likely to forget it," laughed Eleanor, changing her position with easy grace, "but he never was insignificant. On the contrary, he is one of the handsomest and most distinguished-looking men in New York. Everard would add, 'slightly sardonic in his beauty.' No man ever looks the worse in my eyes for that."

"How old is he?" asked her step-mother.

"Everard says he will be the youngest man in the Senate. Just turned thirty-five or thirty-six, I think."

"So young! I imagined him about fifty," her step-mother said, much surprised. "Young, handsome, and an Honorable! Well, you know I think the one necessary thing in life for a young girl is to make a good match. I wonder if the senator is fancy free?"

Eleanor blushed a little. To tell the truth, she was just asking herself that same question. To

cover the slight confusion caused by this thought, she bent herself more diligently to her work.

"I think I heard once that he was a sort of woman-hater," she said, counting the stitches. "Do you know he has been stopping in Fairstock for some time, and is well acquainted with uncle Arthur and cousin Daisy? How I wish uncle Arthur could be called here! it would just suit him! I have heard people who know him say that he was, at the least, a ten-thousand-dollar clergyman thrown away upon a three-thousand-dollar parish. I know he has splendid gifts."

"Did your cousin Daisy never mention this Mr. Temple?" asked Mrs. Lyttleton.

"I don't remember that she did. Oh, yes!" laughing a little, showing superb white teeth, "she did speak once of a celebrated infidel who came sometimes to the parsonage. That must have been Mr. Temple, come to think of it. He is rather a free-thinker, I suspect; and Daisy, brought up in the seclusion of a country town and a minister's home, must have, naturally, a horror of such a character. Poor little Daisy! I haven't seen her since I was sixteen years old, and what a prim little piece she was! quite astonished because I didn't study Latin, I remember."

"Is she pretty?" asked Mrs. Lyttleton.

"Well, yes, after a rural style,—fresh color,

very large blue eyes, and no kind of figure. So very prim, too, I remember, though she may have outgrown that. I think she has some talent. She sings rather well, I have heard. In her last letter she speaks of longing to come here, but finds it inconvenient. I suspect the child has no dresses fit to wear, and she is too proud to let us get them for her."

A maid entered softly at the farther end of the room bringing a letter, which she offered on a silver tray to Eleanor.

"Speaking of angels," said Eleanor, smiling, "this is from Daisy. I will read it, if you will excuse me."

The well-trained maid had gone as softly from the room as she had entered. Mrs. Lyttleton looked—not out of the window; it was too heavily draped for that—but at it, busily thinking. Why should not Eleanor marry a senator?

"Oh!" and Eleanor, with this exclamation, let the hand that held the dainty missive drop in her lap. "How splendid!" she resumed, looking up with sparkling eyes. "Daisy has had some money left her, quite a little fortune to a girl situated as she is. And now she says she looks forward to paying me a visit. How glad I am! I hope she will have her dresses made in New York. It would not be amiss to give her a hint. It will be some-

thing of a task, though a pleasant one, to form and fit her for society. Of course she is very nice and all that, and a season in Washington will do more for her than anything else could. I shall write her, directly, to come as soon as she can."

"I don't think I should be in a hurry," her step-mother said. "How do you know but that she might be — well, rather in the way?"

Eleanor looked her surprise.

"A little country girl!" she said, divining her mother's meaning, "who if not plain, and I think she must be rather pretty, is not at all formed. I only hope she may make a good match. Don't worry, mamma mine; there's nothing at all effective about her, nothing that would please a man as mature as Mr. Temple; and I suppose you mean him. I am afraid you are incorrigible as a match-maker, mamma."

"I must confess I wish to see you well married; and if this Temple is not ill-looking, in fact, is handsome, as you say, I should be only too glad to have him for a son-in-law."

"I don't know as he has ever thought of me since the last time we rode together in the park, and I'm sure I have thought very little about him," she added, with a slight blush. "There, it reminds me: Byron, had he been tall, might have looked like Mr. Temple."

"Indeed! then he is distinguished in appearance."

"That is the word," said Eleanor, leaning back, holding the letter with languid grace. "I am so glad my cousin is coming! Do you know, I think she will amuse Everard? He needs a companion, since he is such a cynic; and he can escort his cousin anywhere; no remarks will be made. She shall have a good time, though I may be obliged to apologize for her sometimes."

Then the two women discussed which room should be appropriated to Daisy's use; and Eleanor pleased herself with fancies of all she would do to form and to introduce her cousin to her own circle.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE NEW SENATOR MEETS ELEANOR.

FROM five to eight were the words that conveyed to the initiated and invited hundreds that they were expected guests at Mrs. and Miss Lyttleton's "tea."

At five exactly, having had his instructions, Everard Lyttleton, scrupulously attired, as was his wont, made his appearance on the scene with his friend. The guests had not yet begun to arrive, so that for a few moments Eleanor had the expected visitor all to herself.

Standing on a snow-white wool rug, near the low, elaborately carved mantelpiece, she presented a vision of loveliness such as had seldom delighted his eyes. Her dress was a pale pink covered with black lace, and looped with delicate pink buds,—a costume, with all its elaborateness of detail, so simple in appearance, and so becoming to the style of its wearer, that it pleased the eyes without in any way offending the taste.

One of Washington's most regal beauties, she

knew how to take the imagination captive, if not the heart. Instinctively he looked for a likeness to the little girl whose sweet face was shrined in his heart like a holy thing. He found it in the eyes and the lips. Elsewhere it was wanting. This girl had an air of repose that set him at his ease at once, and yet, in some unaccountable way, did not please him. Her eyes looked frankly in his own; whereas, in his wild-wood flower, as he mentally called Daisy, they had a trick of falling beneath a too intense gaze, that added to their beauty, and allowed the long lashes to sweep the cheeks.

Society had made Eleanor outwardly a finished piece of human mechanism. Not a bow was tied, not an ornament added, that she did not patiently and often study every little detail. Her laugh was low and pleasant. Nothing could be more beautiful than the arrangement of her hair, yet, like her dress, it was elaborate, and done up by a first-rate artist. Yet he could not but feel that the effect she produced on him was bewildering. He also found unusual pleasure in her conversation, always looking in her eyes, that seemed to him mirrors in which Daisy's bright smiles were reproduced. Daisy's deep, dancing, satisfying dimples were wanting; and though not so enthusiastic as the man who declared that he could follow a dimple

to the ends of the earth, yet, if he had a weakness, it was for dimples in a woman's cheek.

Daisy's were always there, little points of laughter that made her face at all times idyllic.

"She is utterly charming, this girl," he said to himself, more than once; "and yet I should not wish to see Daisy like her, a finished woman of the world, at twenty. No, rather my sweet wild-flower, with a few social faults to be rectified, a blush now and then, and an eye not quite so steady."

"I do congratulate you with all my heart," Eleanor said, in an answer to a remark he made concerning his present visit to Washington. "And you have just come from my cousin, too, Everard tells me. How glad I am that we have a few moments to ourselves to talk about it! I know what your opinion is of my uncle Arthur. To me he always seemed a perfect clergyman, as he was a kind and loving uncle."

"Mr. Prince is one man in a thousand," said Temple. "He does manly things. That is why I like him so much. To me he is a model of all the virtues, with a sparse sprinkling of weaknesses. He smokes when he likes, and is not above a good joke when it suits his humor. He is a good man, a thoroughly good man, the king, not the slave, of his conscience."

"Thank you," she said, her eyes sparkling, her face more than brilliant in its beauty. "I think I should quite adore him if I saw him often. I know my own mother often said that to her he was a veritable sunbeam. How fond she was of her 'bonny brother,' as she often called him! And now about Daisy. You must tell me just how she looks," she added, lifting her beautiful arm as she carelessly swayed the fan of white ostrich feathers that hung at her side.

A tremor passed over his face, which she did not happen to see, as at that moment she turned in the direction of a sound of clinking glass or china in the next room, where there were some rare Sèvres of which she was very proud; and then a light came into his dark eyes that transfixed her glance as she looked back into them again.

"I did not dream he was half so handsome," she said to herself with a few wild heart-throbs, but never thought of the illumination in connection with her cousin. She was so sure of herself, her grace, her beauty, her power of charming. The one vulnerable point in her otherwise flawless character, was a weakness akin to vanity; and even that was tempered with a noble self-forgetfulness, at times, that robbed it of half its danger.

"Miss Daisy is something like you," were the few commonplaece words he said in reply; but no

one could see how his heart was beating, or that the passion of his love welled up till he almost thought it would smother him.

“Indeed! in what way, I wonder? I always thought she would be rather *petite*,” the girl said, toying with her fan, with fingers as shapely and white as Daisy’s own.

“She has not your stature; but her eyes are blue, and her hair is the color of yours,” he added, his eyes roving over her lovely head.

“She was such a pretty little thing four years ago when she was only fourteen and I sixteen. Is she still as prim and religious as she was, I wonder? Do you know, I had a letter from her to-day, and she is coming to visit me?”

He caught his breath. He could have knelt and kissed the hem of her garment for this unexpected news. The halo of his love seemed to inwrap her, so intent was his glance; and Eleanor, for a moment, felt a new triumph, and a sensation, that, had she been by herself, she would have struggled against.

No one could see how this momentary feeling shook her, nor in his case how the mere mention of Daisy’s coming had set all his pulses flying, quiet and unconcerned as he looked.

“I cannot tell you much about her accomplishments,” he said, in a slow way. “I only know

that she has a very superior voice, which, with proper cultivation, would be second to none. That she is zealous in church-work, I know. She sings the service divinely."

She looked up at him, but his face was untranslatable, though it seemed to her she detected a something in his voice that puzzled her.

"We will go into the tea-room. Our friends are coming, and I am neglecting them," she said, conscious that with every look and word of the man before her, her heart went out to him, and half-angry with herself that it did. "Let me make you acquainted with my mother. Mamma, this is the Honorable Andrew Temple, our new senator," she said as they entered the room where Mrs. Lyttleton was receiving her guests.

"Ah! I see now," he said to himself, as perfect woman number two, more beautiful even than her step-daughter, came forward with polite phrases and extended hand, "this woman has been her teacher."

And now the work of the hour, or hours, began. Introductions followed close upon each other. Bewildering costumes, delicate perfumes, beauty of every description, passed in array before the new-comer, who kept up conversation as he was permitted with Eleanor's brother. Everard Lyttleton acted, if he did not feel it, the bored and listless man of the world to perfection.

"I hate this kind of thing, you know," he murmured in an aside to Temple; "have to submit to it, of course. Same thing over and over: lunch, lunch-call; tea, tea-call; dinner, dinner-call; german, favors, and more calls, cards *ad libitum*, pretty girls, clever women, and all that, but the same faces over and over."

The scene was now decidedly exciting as well as picturesque. The spacious apartment was a picture in itself, with its decorations of blue and gold. Little tables dotted the long length of the polished floors, all tastefully set with silver and the costliest china. Here tea, coffee, *bouillon*, were wildly darting about in the hands of sable attendants, whose black, shining faces contrasted well with the bright little caps and kerchiefs that topped their woolly craniums; while solemn waiters in dress-coats handed the cold meats, croquettes, and rich cakes.

Some of the callers were sitting, some standing; and a weird hum, like the monotone of the sombre woods on a wind-shaken day, filled the great room. Senators' and members' wives, women well known in the world of fashion, authors, scribblers, pencil in hand, soliciting with an anxiety begotten of their poor memories and poorer salaries, were soliciting the names of the best-dressed guests, and begging for enlightenment on style, color, and material.

Fun was rife now among the younger part of the company. Others were comparing notes as to their society defeats or successes: in general, all looked happy. Wherever Temple appeared, a sensation followed.

“Isn’t he handsome?” “How interesting!” “Who is he?” were questions asked and answered. In the course of an hour everybody knew that he was the lately elected senator. Then ensued contention and rivalry worthy the pencil of a Hogarth. One beautiful girl in blue volunteered to refresh him with tea. Another offered cake; until, surrounded, almost frightened, by this bevy of lovely and fashionable women, Temple prayed to be delivered. Fortunately at that moment he looked up and saw Eleanor, who, with a motion of calm if not proud superiority, smiled as she said, putting her gloved hand on his arm, —

“There will be some singing presently, in the music-room. Won’t you take me there?”

“With pleasure,” he said.

The music-room was comparatively empty, but it was large and cool, and furnished with reference to its uses.

There were stands for violin and other stringed instruments: an immense music-box stood upon two ebony columns. In the far corner gleamed the gilt frame of a harp. An alcove, brightened

by the glittering pipes of an organ, faced the great bay-window. Two pianos, one a handsome square, the other a grand, stood along the sides of the apartment. The ceiling was thirty feet in height, and capped by a beautiful dome in colored glass.

“What a splendid room!” burst from Temple’s lips, as they paused, while the accompanist took his seat, and the singer, a woman well known in musical circles, lifted her music with jewelled fingers, and prepared to sing. The hush of expectancy succeeded, and then came a flood of melody that thrilled every heart there.

Eleanor looked up at her companion, conscious of a sudden, unaccountable rapture. Through all the forced calm of conventionalism, the music had penetrated, and taken her inmost soul by storm. And when her escort gravely smiled down at her,—those who smile seldom, smile sweetest,—thinking all the time of Daisy and her fresh young voice, so superior in all but training, she took the smile to herself, and said,—

“What depth in his eyes! How unlike in everything to the men I have been accustomed to meet! And surely, he does not look at all women that way!”

At the close of the evening’s festivity, Eleanor went up the broad, well-lighted stairway another

woman from the one who came down in the morning. A different set of thoughts, of reflections, questionings, crossed the threshold of her consciousness.

"Shall I, or shall I not?" she asked herself, standing before the broad mirror that reflected back the splendor of upholstery, the delicacy and freshness of the tinted walls and painted ceiling. "Shall I, or shall I not?"

She took the rings from her fingers one by one, and laid them on the cushions of satin, ready for her maid to put them away. Then followed necklace, diamond pin, bracelets, before she had answered the question, and all that time she was studying the glass.

"Some say I am the most beautiful woman in Washington," she whispered, "and I am beautiful. Shall I try? *Need* I try to captivate this strangely fascinating man? Have I the power? He will come again — he said he would. He turned with a parting smile after he had said good-night. The wife of a senator! It sounds well. It is worth the thought. Few men meet me who do not profess to love me, but I have never before" — she paused, holding both hands tightly against her hot face, — "I mean," she added, "my fancy has never before been captured by any of my numerous admirers. Well, I will leave it. What is to be, will be."

“Dear, are you up?” asked her mother, and put aside the blue silk *portières*. “Oh! not gone to bed yet? Your father has a headache, and I came for your salts. My bottle is broken. Thank you,” she said, smiling, as the article, a gold-chased *vinaigrette*, was handed to her. “I think, love, the siege was inaugurated to-night,” she said, with an arch smile. “Wish you success. He is admirable — such shoulders! And his face is nearly perfect. What *is* the expression? He must have had some deep experience. All these — what shall I say? — Byronic-looking men, have. Good-night, my dear — and dreams — well, of the Senate;” and she laughingly disappeared.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DAISY HEARS THE NEWS.

THE twins were slightly indisposed; and before the rectory gate stood the doctor's old chaise with Dolly in the shafts, as fat and sleek and lazy as ever.

Inside, in the study, his gold-headed cane in one hand and an immense red silk handkerchief in the other, the doctor was talking to Daisy.

The room wore its usual cosily cheerful aspect, though the sky had been gray and gloomy for the past few days, and rain was threatening. A fire sent bright reflections over the oaken panels, and made red pictures everywhere within the compass of its cheerful rays.

"Very sympathetic," he was saying to Daisy. "If one of these little fellows gets hurt, the other cries, don't he? Thought so. Symptoms exactly alike. Let me tell you that the bond between them is rather unusual. Demming's twins,—you know Demming, the carpenter, don't you? Well, he has twins, girls; and one of them is a

sickly, spindling thing, while the other is fine and healthy. No special compact between them, I can tell you. I've seen one lying at Death's door, and the other playing by itself in the garden, as utterly oblivious to all sense of feeling in the matter, as though she was made of wood. I hope the babies here will get through without any dangerous illness; for, upon my word, I must save both or neither. It's a curious question whether the larger culture of the parents, the finer sympathy between them, makes the difference. The Demmings are rather a coarse lot — good people as ever were, but" — he paused significantly. "Well," he began again, as Daisy went on with her sewing, "Rush Severn has gone away, hasn't he? And so has that high-bred infidel, whose long legs carried him safely over that chasm at the old mill. Oh! I've heard all that story. Have you sent them both off?" and the blunt old doctor looked hard in her face.

"I sent neither of them off," said Daisy with some spirit, the rose-pink deepening in her cheeks. "Pray, why should you think so?"

"You must pardon an old fellow like myself for saying that doetors see beneath the surface of things. Under all these muscles and tissues and nerves, there are hearts, my dear Miss Daisy. Sometimes I verily believe I've got one myself,

particularly when in the presence of some young ladies I know of. There, there — you know I'm rough-spoken. I hope you are not going to be angry with a man old enough to be your grandfather, because a pretty face has the power to move him. No, no, rather blame the magic that sets all men to loving sooner or later. By the way, I have some news for you, so clear your blue eyes. Your infidel, free-thinker, or whatever you will,— in other words, the Honorable Mr. Temple,— is to-day a senator of the United States."

Daisy rose, and stood rooted to the spot, her cheeks going from red to white. So this was the business of "great importance" that called him to Washington!

"What do you think of that? Of course he never spoke of the honor that might be in store for him? Too wise; too modest. Why, he is the 'most modestest man I ever met,' as little Jerry Tompkins said of his bird. 'Doctor,' says he, 'I watch and watch, but Dicky won't let me see him bathe. He's the most modestest bird I ever knew.' Here was this man walking in and out among us, all the time the recipient of high honors in every way, and yet I'll bet my two bantam roosters he never mentioned it."

"Never to me, never to my brother," Daisy said, exultantly. Pride at this new token of Temple's worth, made her a little dizzy.

"Never to anybody, I'll wager. And here comes the rector himself. Well, sir, the twins are doing finely," he said, addressing his clergyman. "I left one crowing, the other laughing. Tell your wife to shed as few unnecessary tears as possible. You have heard the news about Temple, I suppose?"

"Yes," and the rector's glance went half furtively towards Daisy. The doctor saw it and chuckled to himself. "He is now in the Senate, it seems, the youngest man there. Big honor for Temple—a grand character, that man! He has kept the thing secret from the beginning. Most men would have gabbled."

"Yes, gabbling men," said the doctor, rising, and using his handkerchief sonorously. "I was wishing Miss Daisy, here, joy—that is, *did*. I wish you joy, my dear Miss Daisy? or was it merely in my mind, I wonder? I'm rather forgetful at times, sure sign of coming old age;" and laughing to himself he went out, shrugging his shoulders.

"Well, Daisy," said her brother, "I congratulate you. And yet it's curious; my little sister the wife of a senator—if it should be. Not that you're not worthy of it, my darling," for Daisy had come forward, and now stood with her face hidden on his shoulder.

"I'm—very proud of him," she murmured.

"Of course you are; so am I — so must all his friends feel, for I am quite sure that in this case it is the office seeking the man. Well, I suppose I shall have to give you up to him. How I shall miss you! Tell me, have I kept my promise to your dying mother, darling? Have I made you a happy home?"

"You have been everything to me," said Daisy, "you and Mary."

He kissed her twice on the forehead, and went up-stairs to tell Mary the news.

"Why, Arthur!" she said, leaving the twins to a rapturous contemplation of each other's charms, "I can't believe it."

"It's true, nevertheless. Our little Daisy must take her chances in the great world. What that world will do to her, we can none of us foresee; the dew *must* dry on the blossom when the sun rises. I can't imagine our Daisy a fashionable woman."

"Nothing will hurt her; nothing can harm Daisy," said Mary with confidence. "With every eventide the dew falls again, you know. This new turn of fortune will only develop the latent abilities that are sleeping in her nature. The finer and more imposing aspects of city life will bring out finer points of character, especially with such a man as Temple to guide and shield her."

For though I don't know that I particularly admired him, still he must be an exceptional man."

"He is," said the rector, turning smilingly to the twins.

"Don't they look lovely?" Mary asked, with all a mother's pride. "To-day is the first day they have seemed like themselves."

The rector sat down by the little double bed with its lace canopies, and presently took both children upon his knees. Daisy came in from her room. She stood still for a moment, smiling at the pretty picture. There was a sense about her of something out of the common — something unreal.

"Have you heard?" she asked her sister-in-law.

"Yes, dear; and I congratulate you with all my heart," the latter said, kissing her. "With one bound you will be at the head. Imagine our little Daisy taking the lead in Washington society!"

"Oh, no! that is not in me," said Daisy, shrinking.

"We shall see," and Mary laughed. Daisy, still moving like one in a dream, went into her room to dress. She had made an engagement to call upon Mrs. St. Albert that afternoon. Little Zue brought her a letter while she was dressing.

"I know who it's from," she said with coquettish glances ; "it's your lover!"

"You bad little thing!" Daisy exclaimed, really annoyed ; "you don't know what you are talking about. Give me the letter."

"Yes, I do," said the child ; "it's Mr. Temple. He's a wicked man ; my mother says so :" and with this parting shot, she gave up the missive, and ran down-stairs, jealousy tugging at her heart-strings.

Daisy sat down, half-dressed as she was, and slowly broke the envelope.

"He's a wicked man!" rang in her ears. Why should Margy accuse him in the presence of her child? Of course she had said it. Zue's quick ears were not to be deceived. A moment more and she was drinking in eagerly all the sweet words penned for her eye alone, and had forgotten the child's small malice.

"Write me now and then. Do not trouble yourself. I'm deep in business, but I shall probably write six letters to your one, as I shall not miss a day if I can help it."

"As if it would be a trouble," said Daisy. And yet she felt a sense of relief that he exacted so little. She finished putting on her wraps and went out.

The beauty of an October day lay all around

her. In spite of all the prophetic predictions of the wiseacres, the weather was still mild. The flowers of a late autumn still lingered, and in all the sheltered places a new growth of crisp green grass was springing up. Overhead the trees had not yet lost their leaves, and still kept their grace of outline, their branches swaying in the soft, warm wind. Now and then the sun struggled through the blue-gray of the sky, throwing a weird brightness on the scene.

With mingled feelings of pride, tenderness, and gratitude, the girl walked on towards the residence of her friend. She found Mrs. St. Albert cheerful as ever, sorting letters and papers.

“I’m so glad you’ve come, my dear! Take a seat here in this snug alcove. It’s the place where I do all work of this kind. Letters! letters! Do you know, I get tired of the sight of them?” she went on, as Daisy snuggled down in the great blue easy-chair that everybody said must be lined with swan’s-down, it was so comfortable.

“Now here is one from the tenant of my plantation in South Carolina — always place the emphasis on the second syllable, — *ol*, — if you want to get on in good society. Well, the man who took the place is suffering from rheumatism; hasn’t been able to do a day’s work for the last quarter. His wife is sickly, and they have eight children.

They beg me to have patience. Patience ! why, Daisy, they owe me the whole year's rent. What am I to do ? And a stout, able-bodied man wants the place. They could go into a little cottage on the farm, but they couldn't turn round in it."

"What in the world will you do?" asked Daisy, her interest divided between the suffering family, and the loss sustained by her friend.

"That's what I *have* done ;" and she held a check before Daisy's eyes, a check for a hundred dollars.

"What ! You are going to send them that ?"

"Yes. My bald-headed angel says that money is scarce," Mrs. St. Albert continued. "He gave me that hundred with a little sage adviee. Queer, wasn't it, when I was going to get a sage-green costume for winter ? Well, I find I can get along without it, so as I am a soft-hearted fool, I suppose, I am going to remit a part of the year's rent, and send them this to help them through. Eight children, my dear ! They must all go bare-footed ! It would take a small fortune to keep them in shoes. Perhaps I ought to cry over my own softness ; but, do you believe I shall ever be any the poorer ? "

"Mrs. St. Albert ! it is glorious of you !" said Daisy, with beaming eyes. "Oh ! do let me help them. I can give a little money and not feel it."

"I shall allow nothing of the kind, honey. They wouldn't take it from anybody but me. As my old nurse used to say, 'Don't you go into de tatterdemillions, chil'n, cause de sky-lark singin' in yo' bosom — wait till de flurry's past.' So you can wait till more help is needed. I am going to send my own dear old Carolina doctor, Flossy, to the man. He will go, for he owed my father money, and will gladly lessen his obligation in that way. He is a youth of only eighty-one short summers, but good for the rheumatism yet. Oh! I clean forgot! Our Mr. Temple is a senator! Daisy, why *didn't* you catch him while you could? Think of being a senator's wife!"

Daisy blushed divinely red.

"I half believe you did. Hold up your hands, child."

Daisy laughed, holding up her slender white fingers.

Mrs. St. Albert shook her head.

"I don't see an engagement-ring. Never mind, Daisy, you will have your chance yet. You are going to Washington, of course."

"Next month," Daisy said, "if I can get ready."

"Get ready! Why, you must. You shall have your dresses made by Madame Pantane, my own peerless dressmaker. If you like, she will even get the material and cut by measurement, as she

does for me. Then we will take a day or two and go to New York. You can have them all fitted at once, and the thing is done. She will charge like the mischief, of course; but then not a care will disturb the serenity of your mind, and I know you are not a miser. Talking of misers, I had an aunt who had worn a seal-skin coat for twenty years. Well, you may imagine it was only the ghost of the original seal. She wouldn't allow her nearest friend to make her a present; that was one of her fads. So when I bought mine, she admired it very much. 'If I could only get one for a hundred and fifty dollars like that,' she said, 'I believe I would buy one.'

"' You can,' I said, 'there is just one left. Give me the hundred and fifty, and I will get it for you.' To my great surprise she consented. I went in to town and bought one like mine, paying the difference — another hundred and fifty — out of my own pocket. She was very much pleased, as you may imagine; and so was I, to see the last of that wretched old coat. The very first time she came to the house, she wore the old seal-skin, gaping from a hundred wounds.

"' Where's your new coat, aunt?' I asked.

"' La, child,' she answered, 'Mrs. Colonel Tasket offered me twenty-five dollars for the bargain, and I sold it to her!'

"Imagine my feelings! I don't believe I have been thoroughly unselfish since then."

"Did she ever know it?" asked Daisy.

"Never; but she remembered me in her will; so you see I got my money back. But about this Washington visit. How delightful to have relatives at Washington! We must get the new dresses all done, and then what a honeybug you will be! That's what my old Nana called me on the occasion of my coming out. She described the ceremony in this way:—

"Our folkses gib a party, an' de big bugs dey come down the revenue in kerridges, an massa receive dem in a very hostile manner. Den Miss Ally she come down stars all dressed in tarlinton, an' de folks dey all shook hands wid her. I dunno what dey called it, somethin' wid a debby to it, but I calls it a honeybug, 'cause she did look so sweet as honey in de hive.' Poor old nurse. She lived to see me married."

The two women were soon busy comparing notes over the fashion-magazines of the month; and when Daisy went home she felt a sense of relief in having Mrs. St. Albert's co-operation, for every thing was settled,—color, style, material,—and Daisy was fancy free once more.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ZUE'S REMORSE.

ON the following day another letter came from Temple, also one from her cousin.

"We are deciding about your room," wrote the latter; "and, as change is the social order of the day, we are anxious to know what is your favorite color. It can be done up in blue, buff, or pink, just as you decide, and we intend to keep you for a good long visit.

"A friend of ours who knows you, calls here often. He is very handsome, very distinguished-looking, a wonder of wit and intelligence," the writer went on, "and his name begins with T. That is all I mean to tell you, at present. Don't imagine that he is a lover of mine; it has not come to that yet, but he is very agreeable; I may add, rather fascinating. I can't get him to talk about you. I hope you haven't been flirting with him. Of course you never did. You are much too staid a little girl to indulge in such nonsense. He was astonished enough when he learned that

we were cousins. I hope to introduce you to many notabilities. If you are real good, you need not go back at all, but live in a house of your own in this splendid city. Don't let me frighten you with my nonsense, and pray send me your favorite color, so that we may have plenty of time. We are having the whole house done up now, and by the time you come it will be lovely."

Sc much for Eleanor's letter. Now for a sentence in Temple's correspondence:—

"I have met your cousin, Miss Eleanor Lyttleton. I was suitably astonished, for I did not even dream that you had a relation in Washington. She is really a very beautiful girl, and somewhat resembles you, though she is taller and older. Judging her from a society point of view, she is very successful as a giver of teas and luncheons; but I hear that she is also very generous, and belongs to half a dozen or more charitable associations.

"I have said very little about"—here the word "our" was scratched out, and "my" substituted,— "about my acquaintance with your family and yourself, as it would not be good form to disclose my preferences and hopes, until after I meet your brother, and the matter is settled to his satisfaction. To be sure, I might write him, but I have a lawyer's objection to writing about things which are personally important. I know that I have your dear

heart, and that is enough for me. Your cousin may suspect, but she is very polite if she does. So when we meet, I will turn over your music, and assist you at luncheon, and the like, and be your very good friend. Shall I keep my eyes from telling tales, I wonder?

“ You will find your cousin Everard — not exactly a dude, he has too much brains for that, but apparently a very dissatisfied young fellow, playing the *rôle* of a worn-out worldling, and he not yet twenty-five. You must help him find his youth again. It is sorrowful to see a man *blasé* at twenty-four.”

Daisy answered both letters in her direct, simple style, then went down-stairs and played something from Mendelssohn, wondering where all her enthusiasm had gone. Her cousin must indeed be very beautiful to draw words of such praise from her reticent lover.

“ Possibly she thinks of me as a simple country girl — and so I am,” she added quickly, leaving the piano, and going towards the window. “ She, Eleanor has always lived in cities, always been in circumstances of affluence, and I know almost nothing of city ways and society. Still, I am not afraid,” and she drew her slight figure to its utmost height. “ If he finds in her a more congenial companion to share his exalted destiny —

and he says she is very beautiful — but what is this? Am I already jealous?"

Her reflections were becoming decidedly depressing, though she laughed at herself. She moved to another window, and in so doing commanded a view of Zue, who, back to her, was digging a hole in the corner of the fence, near the field, with the kitchen-shovel. Something dark showed on the ground near her.

Daisy went to the door, all in a tremor.

"Zue," she called, "what are you doing?"

The child started violently, but made no reply. Again Daisy called, but the little girl stood sulkily still, only shrugging her shoulders.

Daisy went out, oblivious of the damp, for it had been raining. Zue gave a low cry, and attempted to run, but Daisy caught her by the arm.

"What is that thing down there? Why, Zue! it's a cat, and dead!"

The girl tried to shake herself out of Daisy's grasp. Then she slid down to the ground and began to cry.

"Why, Zue! it's Lapwing!" Daisy exclaimed with a gesture of horror. "My pretty Lapwing, dead! Tell me, how did she die?"

Zue maintained an obstinate silence.

"Come into the house, you terrible girl, and I

shall see what your mother has to say!" Daisy exclaimed, shaking all over with mingled wrath and grief, and leading the now unresisting Zue, who was sobbing in a paroxysm of terror.

"See, Margy, what does this mean?" Daisy asked. "Do you know what the matter was with Lapwing? My poor little unfortunate kitten?"

"Yes, I know," was the half-sullen answer. "Zue killed it."

"Zue killed my kitten!" Daisy repeated with a little scream. "Zue! when she knew how much I loved it! Zue! and I planning day and night to help her, working all the time for her good."

"Don't do it, Miss Daisy, she — she's not worth it. I've given her up long ago."

"Zue, what did you do it for?" asked Daisy, almost crying.

"She won't tell you, but I will. She got in one of her fits of temper, and the poor kitten happened to come in her way, so she just up with the poker and broke its back. It didn't live long," said the woman stolidly.

"Oh! my poor little Lapwing!" sobbed Daisy. "Cruel, wicked girl! — I give you up. There's no use, as your mother says, in trying to help you. I did think you loved me a little, but now I see that you only hate me, and destroy and kill my

pets, who have never harmed you. I never can be good to you again. I want you to keep out of my way. Sometime I shall hear dreadful news of you. You will kill some human thing, and then you are gone. Margy, what makes the child so cruel?"

"Don't ask me, Miss Daisy;" then she added, between her shut teeth, "her father was cruel before her."

"Who was her father? Where is he living?" asked Daisy, in a kind of desperation.

The woman turned and looked at her, then burst into a hard, bitter laugh.

"You ask *me* that? Yes, he *is* living, honorable, respected; there, you've got all out of me that you ever will get. Go away, Miss Daisy; please go away. I'm — sometimes I'm not sure of myself. Don't tremble that way, you dear girl. Nothing shall hurt you; I swear that! What am I saying?" She put her hands to her head. "Forget it all, Miss Daisy. The child troubles me so! She worries me out of my life from day to day, and what *can* I do? When she struck the poor little kitten in her fury, I might have struck her, crushed the life out of her, the way I felt, but what good would it have done? I might have maimed her for life as I felt then. I've learned to command myself. No; let us go on our ways,

Miss Daisy. Don't waste your money on the child — don't do it. She isn't worth it. Sometimes I think there isn't a good thing in her ; " and the woman wrung her hands in a sort of despair, looking over to where the child sat, hard and sullen yet. " Besides, I've enough for us both. I've saved money. Sometime, if ever she gets sense, I may try to make something out of her. She *did* seem to love you, but she don't know what love is. It's all hate in her hard little heart."

" Have you tried to love her ? " asked Daisy.

The woman paused again, for she had caught up the flat-iron and was using it in a frenzied sort of way.

" How can I love when there's nothing to love ? " she asked in a harsh voice. " Perhaps I gave the child her hatefulness. I shouldn't wonder. Any-way, she is what she is, and I can't change her."

Daisy looked at her compassionately. She had seen people who cared little for friends and associates, who seemed by no ties of interest to be kind to the race ; but to hear a mother talk thus despairingly about a child was something that was new and horrible. What slough of despair had this woman waded through, to feel the clog and mud on her spirit yet ? She went out of the room depressed and sad.

Then Margy sat down, covering her eyes with her hands.

"Always the same!" she cried bitterly. "I cannot get up the courage. But I will! And God help and forgive me!"

Poor little Lapwing was buried by Daisy's own hands; and the girl, in a fever of anxiety, thought over all Margy had said in the solitude of her own room.

"After all, why should I take her cares and vexations upon myself?" she soliloquized. "I have tried to do my best for that unfortunate child, who must have been evil from her birth. I will try to forget—but still—I wish Margy would tell me her story. These hints and passionate outcries make me miserable. So her husband *is* living. She never admitted that before. Is there any way I can get at her entire confidence, I wonder? I think it would do her good, poor thing."

Late that night, indeed near midnight, Daisy was awakened suddenly out of a sound sleep by a strange outcry. She started up in bed, and listened. Again and again that weird, wild outburst, then voices, then some one walking hastily about overhead. Something had happened.

Daisy rose, lighted a hand-lamp, and slipped into her dressing-gown. The cries grew more piercing. Mary knocked at her door.

"For Heaven's sake, Daisy, what is it?" she asked.

"It's in Margy's room, and I'm going up to see," said Daisy, trying to disguise her fear. "You go back to bed and leave it to me. I hear Margy walking about. Don't be frightened."

Daisy's heart was leaping like a wild thing, but she conquered the weakness that made her almost faint, and ran up-stairs. Had Margy, goaded to madness, tortured or killed the child? She knocked at the door. There was a hurried noise as of some one running. Then Margy called out,—

"Who's there?"

"It's I, Daisy," was the answer.

"Thank Heaven! I couldn't have hoped it of you," said the woman, opening the door. "I didn't know what to do. I'm almost crazy. The child drives me out of my wits. I'm afraid she'll go into convulsions."

Daisy went into the room, glad it was nothing worse. There lay the child, writhing in the middle of the bed, her arms thrown wildly out, and stifled sobs fighting with the cries that now rang from her lips. Her eyes were blood-shot. Great tears were rolling down the distorted cheeks. Daisy tried to take her hand, but Zue only struggled, and she desisted.

"Oh! tell her I *do* love her! O Miss Daisy! Miss Daisy! My heart is breaking for you. And now she hates me; and I do, I do, I *do* love her!"

I'd *die* for her! — but she never will love me again. Oh! I'm so sorry!" Then came a prolonged cry, that was pitiful in its heart-aching intensity.

"Zue, listen, I am here," said Daisy. "You must stop shrieking. Everybody in the house is awake. Is that the way you love people? — to worry them?"

"O Miss Daisy! I — oh! — I'm so sorry! Do forgive me, Miss Daisy!" cried the child, her voice broken by sobs. "I didn't mean to kill it — I *really* didn't. Oh! if I could give it life again!"

"She's been going on for more than an hour," her mother said. "I can't do anything with her."

"Listen, Zue," said Daisy, putting her face close to the child, "I *do* forgive you, freely. And if you will be quiet, and as you are so sorry, I won't treasure it up against you. No, indeed! I'll love you again, if you will only try to conquer that wicked temper."

"Oh! I will, Miss Daisy. Oh! I'm so sorry! I do love you, I *do* love you, Miss Daisy! I always did. Please, please forgive me."

"I do; I told you I did," said Daisy, as the child's sobs grew fainter, and the anguish left her face by degrees. "I thought you didn't care; but

now that you do, now that you are sorry, I'll take you back. Come, kiss me, and make up."

The child lifted herself, her abundant hair falling about her like a cloud, and threw her arms about Daisy in a passion of feeling, kissing her again and again.

"If ever I *do* find my father," she whispered in Daisy's ear, "I'll tell him how lovely and good you are; and I never, never'll be wicked again. But, oh, Miss Daisy!" and the sobs started again. "I can't give back your kitty."

"No matter now, about the kitten. I'll get another, perhaps," Daisy said, with natural hesitancy, feeling that she ran the risk of another funeral. And so, by degrees, the child ceased her sobs, and lay pale and exhausted on the pillow.

"We must have no more crying to keep your poor mother up," said Daisy, preparing to leave.

"I've been awful wicked to her too," said the child in a subdued voice, and buried her face in her hands. Her mother looked at Daisy, shaking her head in mute astonishment. She dared not speak; but, for the first time for years, the child went to sleep in her mother's arms, her head pillowled in her mother's bosom.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DAISY'S LAST SUNDAY IN CHURCH.

EVERYBODY in town knew by the time Daisy was ready for her visit to Washington, that she had inherited a legacy from some relation. The choir-girls whispered about it among themselves, the while they criticised the lovely new bonnet and tailor-made suit in which Daisy made her appearance in church.

Under the soft dove color edged with pink, the fluffy pink feathers just showing against its delicate edge, Daisy's face was indeed something to delight one.

"She's like a flower herself," the old sexton said, as she nodded towards him her bright good-morning, her hands full of flowers for the chancel.

"So you are really going to leave us, Miss Daisy," said the pale spinster whose duty and delight it was to decorate the church, and who attended to her work with angelic persistence, in spite of her failing health. "How they will miss you at the rectory! It's the first time for years, too."

"The first time in my life," Daisy made reply.

"What shall we do?" the woman questioned, taking the flowers with eyes that sparkled at their loveliness. "We are so used to your voice in the choir! Miss Rose is not a bad soprano, but there is no voice like yours to my ear."

Daisy thanked her with a smile. Miss Della, in her plain black straw bonnet, and a shawl half a century old, though it was a cashmere, was yet young enough to enjoy the elegance of Daisy's costume, and the lovely, eager face that she had known and loved since the death of Daisy's mother, some ten years before.

"I hope you will come back to us," she said softly.

"Oh! certainly I shall," was the eager reply. "They want to keep me for a long visit, but I have not made up my mind to that. Sometimes I'm about ready to give it all up. I don't know how I can live away from you all. But you see I promised my cousin I would go, when I was a great deal more eager for the visit than I am now, when it didn't look so easy to go."

"Yes, I know that feeling," said Miss Della. "I believe it is so with most of our anticipations. The nearer we get to the goal we long for, the less desirable it looks. But I must hurry with these flowers. How many beautiful lilies!"

She went quickly down the aisle, and Daisy mounted to the loft where the singers sat. A dazzle of light from the eastern window flooded the place, shone upon some children in the side-gallery, making round the commonplace faces a nimbus of glory that lifted them out of the real into something like the shining of heaven.

Daisy took in all the church interior as if she were looking at the long-familiar scene for the last time. The arched roof, with its blazonry of blue and gold; the long aisles and the dusk-red carpet that ran their lengths; the sombre chancel with its eagle lectern and graceful font, the red roses spilling over its marble side; the splendid painted window, through which the sun sifted ruby and amber and diamond rays upon the faces underneath; the slender pillars, the massed candelabras, the gracefully arched windows,—was she indeed beholding them for the last time? Her trance was broken by a question. It was from Rose Dimmock. She was turning the leaves of her hymnal.

“How do you like the new organist?”

“Very well,” said Daisy, flushing a little. She knew the girl’s object was to tease her.

“I dare say he’s nice enough,” Rose said, “but Rush Severn could play all round him, besides being so handsome. I suppose when you are

gone," she added with a malice that Daisy detected under her smooth voice, "Mr. Severn will come back."

"I don't know anything about it," was Daisy's rather curt reply.

"Oh! don't you, really? When are you going?"

"This week," said Daisy, looking for the hymns.

"So soon! Well, I suppose it will be a long visit. Somebody told me that you were going there to get married."

"Somebody was mistaken," said Daisy with an impatient gesture; and Rose smiled, satisfied that at last she had pierced through the armor of her indifference with a home-thrust. She had never quite forgiven Daisy for her superior gifts, and the capture of Rush Severn's heart, and was always emphatic in her declaration that Daisy had led him on with her pretty affectations, and then thrown him off like an old shoe.

"With all her airs and her new bonnet, and in spite of the sacredness of the day," she said afterwards to her next neighbor, "she was as mad as a March hare. I think she could have bitten me."

That day as they sat at the dinner-table at the rectory, Mary said, —

"Doesn't it seem odd to think of next Sunday, and no Daisy?"

"Don't," said Daisy, chokingly.

"I'm glad she is going," said the rector, looking at her with an affectionate smile. "She ought to see something of the world. I think she has been very good to stay with us so long."

Daisy laughed, though the tears stood in her eyes.

"It's the only home I had," she said. "I think it is you who have been good to keep me. If it hadn't been for Aunt Priscilla, I should still be a burden upon you."

"Hear her," said Mary, laughing. "Daisy a burden! Why, you dear child, I shall moisten the twins with my tears from early dawn to dewy eve, when you are gone. I sometimes wish your great-aunt Priscilla had cut you off with a sixpence. In that case we could have kept you with us. However, I prophesy that you won't stay long. Something will happen, and back you'll come, whisking, to the old parsonage and its dull inmates. I wonder what it will be, a wedding or a funeral?"

In after-days she remembered that speech.

"Mary!" her husband exclaimed, a quick light flashing in his eyes. "I thought you had outgrown that trifling way of expressing yourself."

"Well, it occurred to me — you know it *is* just possible that Daisy may get married. That's all I *really* meant. The other escaped me," his wife said with a penitent and rather injured expression.

"My dear, I don't like such sayings even in jest," said the rector, "but of course you meant nothing."

The dresses all came home at the appointed time, and with them appeared at the rectory Mrs. St. Albert, determined to superintend the packing of them. Six times she led Daisy down-stairs triumphantly into the study, to show off her beautiful gowns, and the perfection with which they fitted her pretty, slim figure.

"Every one of them handsome enough to be credited to a Worth," said Mrs. St. Albert; "and many a dress with Worth's reputation clinging to the skirts, is the production of my dressmaker, let me tell you," she added. "The poor thing has to lie awfully sometimes, pretending to wait for the steamers, custom-house inspectors, and all that sort of thing, while her girls are frantically finishing up the work, in hearing of it all. But it puts money in her purse. My incomparable Hugh assures me that it is highly reprehensible in me to give the woman my countenance; but there's nobody else knows how to fit me, and I don't order Worth dresses. See the carnations on this

brocade ! Aren't they charming ? And, speaking of carnations, my father ordered some onion-seed from the Agricultural Department several years ago, intending to put three acres in onions. Old nurse Nana came rushing into the house one morning, some time after they had been planted, crying out, —

“ ‘Fo’ de Lawd, Mars Torrent, de angels mus’ hab blowed dere bref ober dem yar youngyan fields, and de Lawd knows dey needed it. Dey’s all blossomed out like de gardings ob heben.’

“ ‘Blossomed out ! ’ said papa, who had just come home from a long hunting-tour. ‘ What do you mean, Nana ? Who ever heard of such a thing ? ’

“ ‘ Well, it’s de fac, marse ; ef yo’ don’t bleebe de ole woman, come an’ see,’ says Nana.

“ Well, we all went to see the marvellous sight, and, my dear, would you believe it ? there were three acres of glorious carnations. My adorable papa had a bad habit. He took liberties sometimes with the English language. He did then, and so dreadfully that we all got out of his way. But from that day to this, don’t say ‘ yonyions ’ to papa. Poor old Nana ! If there was any bad news, she was the one to bring it. But three acres of carnations ! It was the loveliest sight I ever saw. Gracious, how my tongue runs on !

Daisy, come up-stairs at once, and I will pack these precious things away."

The day and hour came, and Daisy was driven to the depot, Mary and the twins accompanying her, while the rector held the reins. Daisy was very quiet. A comparison full of regret was going on in her innermost heart between her previous longings to plunge into the world, and the real feelings with which she regarded her proposed visit, now that she was actually on the way.

Whenever she thought of Temple, a blissful sense of the surety of meeting him at her cousin's pervaded all her being; but to part with life-long associates, even for a few months, gave her acute pain, and the tears were often all but brimming over her lashes.

"Now, kiss the twins," said Mary nervously. "Say good-by to auntie, little folks, in your choicest vernacular. Maybe they'll keep her where she is going, and you'll never set eyes on her again, you poor, deserted little lambs! Good-by, Daisy," she went on, as the carriage came to a stand-still. "I won't get out. I hate partings and engine-smoke and car-whistles, with the roar of steam in one's ears. Now be a good girl, and don't cry. Write as often as possible, and be as happy as you can;" and so she rattled on till Daisy had left the carriage. Then she leaned back in

the seat, and left the twins to their own devices, while she indulged in a few brief tears, as she afterwards expressed herself to her husband.

Meantime Daisy stood on the platform, the centre of a little bevy of girl-friends, who were busy with last words and well-concealed envy.

"You didn't think I'd let you go off all by yourself, did you?" asked a familiar voice; and there before Daisy's astonished gaze stood Mrs. St. Albert, in a lovely gray travelling-dress, perfect from head to foot, with bonnet, gloves, and ribbons of the same shade.

"But, do you mean," Daisy began, breathless but delighted, "that you are going with me?"

"Of course I do," said the little lady, with one of her charming smiles, which set dimples in motion that rivalled Daisy's own. "See how well your reverend brother can keep a secret! He has known of it—oh! these three weeks. When my peerless spouse and that adorable brother of yours put their heads together, something comes of it. Yes, I am going all the way to Baltimore, there to take a train for my native town. You see, there are matters of business to be attended to. So, as we get to Baltimore in the evening, you and I are going to stop at a hotel for the night, of which, luckily, my husband's cousin is the proprietor. Everything has been attended to. You will be

met the next day at noon by your cousin, and taken to your place of destination."

"How delightful!" and Daisy laughed. "It is certainly nice to be disappointed in that manner. I have been so nervous over the idea of travelling entirely by myself."

"Well, dear, we are going to have a good time," said Mrs. St. Albert, drawing the strings of her gray plush travelling-bag. "To-morrow night we shall be almost at our journey's end."

The rector came up to put Daisy on board the cars. The two ladies were safely seated, the last adieu taken, and, instead of a tearful farewell, Daisy found herself sending merry remembrances to the twins, and last words to Margy and Zue, whose sad faces had followed her to the station.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FOR HER COUSIN'S SAKE.

THE journey was an uneventful one, save that Mrs. St. Albert, with her inexhaustible fund of anecdote and flow of animal spirits, made it seem unusually brief.

The grand room in which they slept that night, with its panels, *portières*, and rich hangings, gave the girl a foretaste of what she might expect in her cousin's palatial home.

"Oh! what a lovely diamond!" exclaimed Daisy, as Mrs. St. Albert laid her ring upon the satin cushion, that half covered the dainty dressing-table.

"Do you think so?" her friend responded. "I suppose it is, but I don't particularly care for diamonds."

"Not care for diamonds! I just adore them. They are the most beautiful things in the world," said Daisy *naïvely*.

"Do you know, I have nearly a dozen diamond rings, of more or less value?" said Mrs. St.

Albert lightly. "I seldom wear them, only to please my jewel-loving spouse. Every anniversary of our married life, he has given me diamonds,—rings or ear-drops, or something of the sort. Sometimes I am tempted to think that he does it as an investment, only the dear man is sentimental, even now with that bald spot on his head. Come, Daisy, you will lose your beauty sleep if you don't go to bed this minute," she added with mock severity.

The rest of Daisy's journey, which was a brief one, was made alone, and she was met at the depot by her cousin and Senator Temple. Save the flush on her cheek, the sparkle of her eyes, and the prolonged pressure of Temple's hand, they might have met as friends or acquaintances, nothing more. Young Lyttleton looked his surprise at the fresh young face, that he at once voted prettier than even Eleanor's; and the welcome he gave her was so warm and natural, that it was no effort for Daisy to call him cousin, at once.

Her reception at the house was equally inspiring. Eleanor carried her off to her room as soon as she came.

"Why, what a woman you have grown!" she exclaimed, as she herself assisted Daisy with her wraps, saying that they would not have the dressing-maid just at first.

"I was very small and young when you saw me last," said Daisy. "Only fourteen."

"Yes, and such a grave little book-worm! I hope you don't care so much for books now."

All this time she was studying the details of Daisy's dress, and mentally deciding that it would do.

"I am not quite as omnivorous as I was then," was Daisy's laughing reply. "Now I choose my reading. Then it did not matter what came into my hand, it was all swallowed. I don't think I cared much for style, however, until I happened on some copies of Addison's 'Spectator.'"

Eleanor groaned within.

"I never happened on any, I am thankful to say, but I do like a good novel now and then. I copied the arrangement of your room out of a book," Eleanor said.

"Is this my room? How beautiful it is! Brother Arthur would say it is a poem."

"Dear uncle Arthur! He is a poem himself," was the response. "There are some noted clergymen here, but none with his personal beauty and magnetic presence. Does he play as delightfully as he used?"

"Just as well," said Daisy, arranging her hair at a splendid cheval glass. "Now what am I to do? Of course I know I'm expected to change my

dress for dinner. But you see I am unaccustomed to city life, and only hope I shall do you no discredit."

"No danger," laughed Eleanor, adding to herself, "If she is so lovely in a simple travelling-gown, what will she be in full dress? I must see to my laurels." A momentary uneasiness seized her, a faintness that caused her to steady herself by the table near her. Of late she had been floating through a golden dream. Nor could she deny to her inmost consciousness that the visits of Temple had come to be the charm of her life. He had been kind to her for her cousin's sake, perhaps at times almost tender, though quite unconsciously so, when her beautiful eyes reminded him of the girl he loved. She had depended on him for the many little attentions that girls are accustomed to expect. She sent him to the florist's if her brother was not at home, confided to him little society secrets, and, if he did not escort her there, she was sure to meet him at the receptions of her friends. Society indulged itself in a mild sort of espionage of the two. It had by no means come to be thought that they were engaged; but little hints went the rounds, some agreeable, others not, and wonderings when it would be. It was the unanimous verdict in all quarters, that she would make a splendid wife for the new senator.

Meantime Eleanor hoped, and before she knew it, her heart was gone.

To describe the anguish, shame, even terror, which were mingled with a passion as pure as woman's heart ever held, when she came to a full knowledge of this fact, would be impossible. Then she realized that she had never before known the meaning of the word love, which, to natures like hers, can come but once. And yet, might he not love her? *Did* he not love her? She trembled from head to foot while searching in her mind for some evidence of the fact.

"Oh! if he should not," she gasped, her whole soul one wild alarm, "I would pray God to let me die."

CHAPTER XXX.

DIAMONDS.

"Now sit down and be comfortable," said Eleanor, as Daisy turned away from the mirror. "We need do nothing but talk for the next hour, if you are not too weary after your journey. Mamma is at a luncheon. We were both invited, but I elected to stay at home to receive you."

"How good of you!" said Daisy; "and I am having such a rest," she went on, letting her head fall back on the luxurious chair. Mrs. St. Albert came on with me, and we stopped at a hotel last night, so you see I ought not to be so very tired. I wish you knew Mrs. St. Albert. She is so pretty and funny! in one word, lovable."

"I think I should like her, if only for her name," said Eleanor. "It sounds, some way, artistic."

"Oh! I forgot;" and Daisy rose, a vivid crimson in her cheeks. "She gave me a little packet. Where is my travelling-bag?"

"Here it is," said Eleanor, producing the article from some recess.

"She told me to open it at my journey's end." The packet was found. "Some last words, I suppose," she went on vivaciously. "Mrs. St. Albert is a great talker, but, oh! so winning and witty!"

Daisy had laid the bag aside, and now proceeded to open the package. Inside was a little oblong jewel-box of white velvet, wrapped about with a note that read as follows: —

MY DAISY OF DAISIES,—Please accept the enclosed from a friend who loves you dearly. I decided long ago that this should be my wedding present to you, and *qui boni?* Don't, please, get married, though, without giving me due notice. The diamonds, setting and all, are an exact *fac smile*—Nana's rendering—of a set I have at home. Adieu. Be happy. A. T. D. ST. A.

Daisy grew pale as she read, then the lovely color came rushing back. Breathless and happy, she opened the box; and there shone the sparkling solitaire she had so artlessly admired the night before; a pair of small ear-drops, each drop a pure, dew-like diamond; and a pin to match.

"Oh! are they not exquisite?" she cried, holding them towards her cousin.

"Indeed, they are lovely! I don't think I ever saw whiter stones. This Mrs. St. Albert must be

rich, if she can afford to make presents of that sort."

"Ought I to accept them?" Daisy asked, putting the glittering things away.

"Don't ask me—I should be only too glad. Accept them by all means, and write one of your very prettiest letters in acknowledgment."

This was Eleanor's advice.

The day waned, and still the cousins sat talking. Only once Eleanor went down-stairs on some hospitable duty intent, and then Daisy was left at liberty to indulge in the reflections that had been checked by her interview with her cousin.

Temple was in her thoughts. How handsome! how royal he had looked when he met her! like a very god. And he had held her hand in a long, warm pressure. She wondered a moment afterward how she herself compared with Eleanor in his eyes.

"She certainly is beautiful," she half sighed, "and her manner is perfect. Even her walk has a grace that I have never seen in any woman before. I wonder if she has the least inkling of how it is between us? Some way, I believe she has; though, of course, till all is settled, he would not speak of it. So I will be as silent as the grave."

When Eleanor returned, her mother came with

her. Mrs. Lyttleton's manner was effusive, but Daisy detected a certain suppression of warmth that troubled her. It was altogether the reposeful, artistic welcome of a worldling, who had her own views of things, and wanted no one to disturb them. She, too, was altogether unprepared for the beautiful face, so sweet in repose, so enchanting when she smiled, that stamped Eleanor's cousin as a favorite of nature.

"And now I suppose I must leave you to dress. Eleanor's maid will attend to you first."

"Oh! indeed, I do not want a maid," Daisy eagerly affirmed. "I am so accustomed to wait upon myself." The expression in her aunt's calm, dark eyes, however, silenced her.

"But, you see, my dear, it will be best for you," said Mrs. Lyttleton in sweet, measured tones. "Virginie would think it odd, wouldn't she, Eleanor? She is accustomed to the work, and would wonder why her services were not needed. She will know exactly what is becoming, and help you unpack your boxes."

Daisy submitted, quite ashamed of her little protest.

"When you are ready," said Eleanor, "you can do as you please about going down-stairs. The piano is open, and the library is very comfortable. *Au revoir!* Virginie, don't spoil my cousin's

beautiful hair, and be as silent as you can. Madam Vergos, our hair-dresser, always comes at ten in the morning. She shall see to it for you to-morrow."

Eleanor left the room; and Daisy surrendered herself to the maid, a pretty, *petite* body, with a clear complexion, and a mouth like a rosebud. When she was dressed, she went down-stairs. She entered the great parlor, which was in shadow, though its fine proportions and splendor of furnishing were visible. A quick step reached her ear. Coming forward, both hands outstretched, an eager look in his dark, striking face, was Temple. Instinctively she let her hands fall in his, and he drew her close to his bosom, and kissed her on the brow. Then he held her at arm's-length as he said, —

"I told them not to announce me. I felt sure that I should see you first. Why, how beautiful you look! I have never seen you like this, before, you know. Henceforth I must call you Pearl as well as Daisy. Oh! my darling, how beautiful you are!"

Daisy blushed divinely, and lent herself willingly to the sweet enchantment of his presence. They sat in the wide circle of one of the windows, talking over the old days; and in Daisy's face was such a light, such peace and love, as would have

struck dread and almost death into Eleanor's heart, had she been there to see.

Presently Everard Lyttleton came in, faultless in costume, a picture of perfect gentlemanliness, and the lovers' conference was at an end. He too was delighted with Daisy's pretty ways, and young, fresh beauty.

"Wait till she has been in the whirl of fashion a year or two," he said in a melancholy whisper. "Sweet simplicity will have utterly vanished, and what a pity it will be!"

They were soon joined by Eleanor, who, whatever her imaginings had been, had regained her own stately yet winning manner, and the four talked merrily till dinner-time.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A BITTER JEALOUSY.

LAUNCHED upon a new life, Daisy was for a time thoroughly engrossed with her social duties, surprises, and triumphs. Receptions were the order of the day. Hops, concerts, the theatres, and social gatherings, of the night. Everywhere her success was simply phenomenal. Eleanor rejoiced in the admiration evoked by her little cousin. Small and spiteful jealousies were unknown to her. Everywhere she brought her cousin to the front, till Daisy learned to manage her beautiful voice before throngs of admiring critics.

"We must have your cousin for a song at our festival," said the wife of the chief justice, after she had heard Daisy sing once or twice. "She is so lovely. I can fancy her standing before an audience in white samite, the angel of beauty and song."

Eleanor hesitated. "She never sang that way," she said, seeing in imagination the splendid arena in front of the stage, the thousands in full costume,

strangers and critics as well as friends and admirers looking on.

"Oh! but she can. She seems like an inspired St. Cecilia when she sings. Beg her to help us, please do. We are none of us professionals,—with the exception of the orchestra, it is all home-talent; and I am sure her name will draw."

"I will try," said Eleanor, and she did. Daisy, after a long siege, gave a reluctant consent. She had asked Temple's advice, and he had said,—

"Do it, by all means."

He wished all the world could hear her, in his love and his pride of her.

Daisy had not counted upon the bewildering effect of a fashionable audience in full dress. The great stage, decorated with flowers, held an orchestra of some of the most celebrated artists in the country.

The blaze of light, the diamonds, as seen from the place where she stood to get a view of all this splendor, frightened her.

"I cannot sing! I cannot go on!" she said, shrinking back like a frightened child. "I never thought it would be like this—and I with my unformed voice."

All in shining white, only a flower at her bosom, she realized the description of Dryden,—

"Her eyes, her lips, her cheeks, her features,
Seem to be drawn by Love's own hand."

At once she was surrounded, praised, petted, coaxed. Luckily she had consented to add her service by singing a simple ballad. Most of the amateurs had chosen ambitiously ; so that, when at last the young girl was prevailed upon to go forward, she had no misgivings as to the *rôle* she had chosen.

Temple sat in the audience, near the stage. At first the tiers of beauty and brilliance almost took away her breath. Only here and there she saw the faces of her friends ; but once she caught sight of Temple, and there was that in his expression that spurred her on to triumph. It was anxious, almost sad.

"He shall not blush for me," she said to herself, and straightened her slender form. The snow-white folds of glistening silk were not whiter than she a moment before that. Now a slight color crept into her cheeks ; and, as she nerved herself for the effort, a murmur of admiration went through the house.

Then she sang,—divinely, the critics said the next day. Only a ballad, but genius voiced it, and the clear, sweet notes fell upon dead silence.

Even after the first stanza, came deafening applause. At the close, the great audience was carried away. Women clapped their jewelled hands, men rose in their seats to call her back.

The sweet, unaffected little song had touched every heart there.

Back she came, looking now like a small goddess, her eyes like stars, cheeks and lips aflame, and sang another little hearthstone song, over which the people were wilder than before. Temple never once applauded. He was dizzy with the intoxication of her triumph, which seemed like a tribute to himself. When the grand bouquets filled her arms, and she nodded and bowed with the most perfect *abandon*, appearing again and again, at repeated calls, he smiled as if in mockery of it all. "What did he mean," Eleanor asked herself, "by making no demonstration? His eyes devoured her, but he sat as motionless as a statue. He was the only one there who paid her no homage."

The President, who sat with his family in the first box to the right, was eagerly inquiring who she was. And yet Senator Temple sat unmoved. How little she understood that smile, or guessed at the thought that prompted it!

"I am a lucky man! Had the stage won her first, she would have been lost to me."

Eleanor's eyes often turned to him.

"Why do you not applaud?" she asked him, as Daisy came out for the last time, and made her lowest courtesy, smiled on all, and rushed into retirement.

"Why, *didn't I?*" he asked, in extreme astonishment.

"Not once."

"I will beg her pardon as soon as I see her," he said.

"I really wouldn't say anything about it," was her response.

Small and spiteful jealousies were unknown to Eleanor; but something in Temple's manner that night, set her to thinking.

"She looked so beautiful," she murmured, a pain at her heart.

"More than that," he said, "pure — almost angelic. My heart did her full homage."

His heart! Another stab.

Was it possible that she so entranced him that he forgot to give the usual signs of approval? Daisy's voice was something phenomenal. It seemed to Eleanor that she had never heard it before to-night.

"If I had her voice," she said, "I would go on the stage."

"God forbid," said Temple, with a fervor that somehow rested and re-assured her. How could she tell that he was thinking of Daisy, and of Daisy alone?

No need to say that Daisy was *fêted*, flattered, and followed, after this.

"Your cousin is quite the prettiest girl in the room," said the wife of a prominent official to Eleanor, at one of the parties given by the British minister. "Pray tell me, is she a relative of Senator Temple?"

"A relative! Oh, no! what made you suppose that?" Eleanor asked, smiling.

"I—oh! nothing in particular. I only happened to meet them in the conservatory, together, and I fancied they might be related. At least, you know, there seemed to be a certain familiarity in their conference, which struck me—well, of course, they may be old acquaintances, you know," she added, noticing the change in Eleanor's countenance.

For Eleanor had changed color, but managed to keep her self-control. She herself had met the two once or twice quite unexpectedly, when it seemed to her there was a certain embarrassment in their manner, as of persons who have a secret between them which must not be divulged.

"Can it be possible that Daisy is deceiving me?" she asked of herself more than once.

She remembered that in the Art Gallery, she had seated herself one day, in the expectation of meeting a friend. The friend did not come, so she took a turn in the rooms; and in one of them she saw, opposite a new picture, Daisy seated beside

Temple. What startled her was not that she met them there, for they sometimes took walks together, but that just before they recognized her, a look passed between them which a sudden jealousy caused her to interpret but in one way. Then, when she would have passed on, they saw her, and Daisy's cheeks were flaming roses, while he was as cool and self-possessed as ever. Once again, Everard had spoken of meeting them in one of the parks on a day when the sunshine made a glowing picture of sky and cloud and tree.

"The man seems to monopolize her," he said moodily. "He doesn't give a fellow a ghost of a chance. I thought, Eleanor, he was *your* lover."

"You had no right to think anything of the kind," she retorted, her heart almost failing her, while she strove to keep her tones firm and steady. But, oh! why had she allowed this man so to possess her thoughts? What spell had he thrown over her? Could it be possible that Daisy had enthralled his fancy, that he loved her?

Eleanor was wretched while wrestling with her doubts; but Daisy floated on in her new paradise, unconscious of the thorns she had so unwittingly planted in the breast of the cousin she had learned to love.

"I am wasting my time to no purpose," she said, one eventful morning. "When I came here,

it was with the intention of fulfilling a duty, an almost sacred duty. Mr. Temple has been kind enough to make some inquiries for me, and has found a teacher to whom I can go for instruction in singing."

"You sing delightfully enough," said Eleanor. "It don't seem to me that you need a teacher."

"So many of my friends are kind enough to say," Daisy responded, smiling, "but I am conscious of many defects."

"Is Mr. Temple one of the friends who flatter you?" asked Eleanor.

Daisy looked up from her crochet needles, astonished at the unwonted sarcasm in the voice. A soft red had crept into her cheek. Her blue eyes fell under Eleanor's glance.

"Oh! no, indeed. He thinks as I do, that I need a great deal of instruction," she answered a little falteringly. "So he was kind enough to interest himself about a teacher."

"I thought he knew nothing about music," Eleanor persisted.

"He is not musical by any means," Daisy replied, "but he is passionately fond of music."

"Do you think Mr. Temple handsome?" Eleanor asked, as if under a stress of feeling which she could not resist, and which prompted her to probe Daisy's inmost thoughts.

"I certainly do," said Daisy, busying herself with her worsteds, in order to hide the blushes that were now painful.

"Would he make a good husband?" Eleanor questioned, growing paler as Daisy's roses increased. "I have reasons for asking."

"A good husband?" Daisy dared her glances now. What was the use of trying to shield herself? "Why, yes; why not? Has he not every requisite that a man can possess for making the one woman of his love happy?" She was fast throwing off the spell which had seized her at Eleanor's first question, and was wondering vaguely, if not jealously, what her cousin's reason could be.

"You do not think him cold, pessimistic, exacting, then?" Eleanor asked in clear, cutting tones.

"Mr. Temple cold! Oh! you do not know him. Were you speaking of his beliefs? his religion? If so, I don't know what to say, only that my brother Arthur believed in him, and was very fond of him. He is not yet a churchman."

"But you believe him in a fair way to become one, evidently. O Daisy, beware!"

The laugh that followed this speech was hard and unnatural. Daisy sat looking at her cousin, bewildered and confused. It seemed in some way as if Eleanor was angry with her, that she was trying to hurt her.

"Why should I beware?" she asked.

"Because a man without religion is like a ship without a rudder. No one knows where he will drift. For that one reason a woman should not dare to intrust her happiness to him."

Daisy's eyes fell. A glow of indignation, then a half-triumphant smile succeeded her momentary fright.

"She loves him!" said Eleanor to herself. "Now for the test — does he love her, or is he seeking a new victim?" At this moment the girl felt merciless. Her very nature seemed changed. In some way she longed to humiliate her cousin, to crush her.

More beautiful, more gifted though she might be, what right had she to the love of this man to whom she herself had given heart and soul? The demon of jealousy possessed her, and for the moment made her deliberately cruel.

"Of course Mr. Temple can choose from among the richest and most beautiful women of the land," she said in a low, hard voice. "His manner is — I do not quite know how to express it, but naturally, when he is pleased, very caressing and lovable. You must not be deceived by it. I am only warning you. In my opinion, a man who passes his life till the age of thirty-five, unmarried, seldom marries at all."

Daisy's soul was at war with itself. She hated deception, and, not for the first time or the second, felt that that interpretation might be candidly put upon her conduct. Her quick intuition told her at once the reason for this unusual conversation, and of Eleanor's changed manner. "Oh! it would be terrible," she said to herself, "if this proud, beautiful woman loved the man to whom she herself was pledged." What should she do? Impulse conquered.

"Dear cousin Eleanor," she said, with downcast eyes, though her embarrassment was gone, and her face alight with a noble sentiment, "I am going to tell you something which no one beside my own people at the rectory know."

Eleanor tried to smile. She felt what was coming. A pair of expressive eyes, melancholy and mirthful by turns, seemed looking into hers. Her heart turned sick. But should she show any emotion now, she felt that she was lost. And yet, so helpless, so utterly wretched she was! for in one swift moment she divined it all, saw Daisy's heart as in an open book, knew what gave her eyes that beautiful tenderness.

"You are to keep it a great secret, you know," Daisy went on. "You are not to tell your mother, or cousin Everard."

Eleanor dumbly shook her head. Only her lips moved a little.

"And I know I can trust you, utterly."

"Yes, you can," Eleanor forced her dry lips to say.

"Then I will tell you. Mr. Temple is — what shall I say? — not engaged to me, because he does not like engagements. But he has asked me to be his wife, and he spoke to my brother before he came on to Washington. I suppose," she added, simply, "after everything is cleared up, we shall be married."

"What do you mean?" asked Eleanor, breathless, "by 'after everything is cleared up'?"

"I don't know myself," said Daisy, "only Arthur has not given his full consent. That is why we have been keeping silent."

"Ah! I can understand," said Eleanor, stunned and faint. "Mr. Temple is said to be an atheist."

"I don't care who says it," Daisy replied quietly, "it is not the truth. He has the best and highest aspirations. He is trying to live after the noblest ideals. Indeed, I do think he is a Christian," she added, her very face transfigured while pleading her lover's cause, "and don't know it."

"Scarcely," said Eleanor with dry lips. "How ridiculous it must have seemed to you, — my giving you advice, and all that! I sincerely beg your pardon. If I had not been kept in the dark, — but no matter," she added with a laugh that

sounded almost like a sob. " You shall find that your confidence in me is not misplaced. I wish you a great deal of happiness, cousin Daisy."

Presently she rose, looked out of the window, and left the room humming a popular air. She went straight up-stairs to her own room.

" And he has been kind to me because of her ! " she said with a dry sob, after shutting and locking the door. " And I couldn't see it ! And, blind and mad that I was, I loved him !

" I couldn't help it," she went on fiercely, smiting one white hand against the other. " Oh ! lamentable. If I could only have known it before — before *she* came here. Why didn't he tell me ? A hint would have been sufficient. It was cruel of him ! Now—oh ! I am dying ! It would be merciful if I could die ! "

She threw herself prone on the bed, and then as suddenly arose. A fierce determination gathered in her eyes.

" I will die," she cried in a smothered voice, " rather than give way to this passion, like a silly girl ! I *will* trample it under my feet ! But, oh, Heaven ! how I love him ! " and again she sank back, both hands clutched against her bosom. Stifled tears which she battled with, burned her eye-balls. Ah ! for how many weary days and sleepless nights would she thus have to fight with

her great grief? Suppose, in the end, it should conquer her!

Daisy, meanwhile, sat looking after the vanished figure of her cousin, a troubled expression in her eyes.

"If she loves him," she said, under her breath, "I shall never forgive myself for not having spoken sooner. And yet, she went out singing! But her face,—her face! There was something there that haunts me. I must go away from here. I must go home."

"I so long to see you all," she wrote the same week. "This hurried, exciting life begins to wear on me. I am not sure that I shall ever like it. Eleanor is very gay; but she also goes to church more than ever, and the clergyman calls often. He used to know you, brother Arthur, and always speaks so kindly of you. It makes me homesick.

"Wouldn't I look well in a Sister's cap?" Eleanor asked me one day. "Sometimes I think that will be the end of my career." And she is getting to be very fond of mission-work. I am very much disappointed in what they call society women here. Many of them are among the noblest workers in Washington. Mrs. Lyttleton does not like Eleanor's self-imposed tasks, but she has very little influence in all that concerns the

higher life, and I fancy Eleanor will have her way.

"I hope the dear little boys keep well. Sometimes it seems as if I could fly to see them. Kiss them a hundred times for me! Tell Zue I don't forget her, and will bring her something pretty from Washington when I come home. Is Margy queer any more? Poor old Margy! remember me to her."

CHAPTER XXXII.

RECALLED BY DEATH.

"A TELEGRAM for you," Eleanor said one morning, as she came in where Daisy was practising. "I hate these things, don't you?"

Daisy took the envelope with trembling fingers. Her face grew colorless. A thrill, the messenger of evil news, ran through her from head to foot. She looked up beseechingly at Eleanor, who stood white and statuesque, gazing down upon her.

"Do you want me to open it?" Eleanor asked.

"Will you?" and Daisy sank helplessly back, as Eleanor took the paper from her. Daisy, watching, saw the look that came into her face, and hid her own face in her hands.

"Daisy — it's bad," said Eleanor. Then, after a pause, "Daisy, it's terrible!"

"O brother Arthur!" sobbed Daisy.

"No, he is well, so is his wife — but the pretty little twins you have told me about so often."

"What of them?" and Daisy looked up, breathless.

"They are very ill — past hope, it says," said Eleanor very gently.

"And — of course they want me. I shall go at once," Daisy said, springing up. "I know they need me — and — maybe — I shall be in time to see them. The sweet darlings! I didn't know how much I loved them ;" and dashing the tears from her eyes she began her preparations for returning.

"Shall Everard notify Mr. Temple?" asked Eleanor. "I suppose you *will* go."

"At once. I wish I had followed my impressions the past week, and gone then. Poor Arthur! his heart is bound up in those two beautiful boys. And if Everard will speak to Mr. Temple, so that I might just say good-by," she faltered.

She had decided to go by the next train. There was just time to pack, just time to notify Senator Temple, and not a moment to spare. The new senator had not yet made his appearance by train-time.

"Tell him I am sorry," Daisy said to Eleanor, "but I could not wait." Eleanor smiled patiently.

"You will find him at the depot," she said; and so she did.

"I made my arrangements to go with you," he said.

Everard saw them both comfortably seated, and then went home to growl at Eleanor.

"The little minx has cut you out squarely," he remarked with a man's thoughtlessness. "I told you how it would be. There was no getting near her when Temple was round. I could have sworn every time that he was in love with her."

"She is welcome," was all Eleanor said; only her heart seemed sinking.

"I wish she had stayed at home," was his peevish rejoinder. "I was pretty hard hit myself, confound it."

The journey was unmarked save by the unflagging attention and cheerfulness of Temple, who used all the delicate art of which he was master, in his efforts to cheer up his pretty companion. Never before had such unselfish solicitude fallen to the lot of Daisy. To be tenderly cared for, served in the daintiest way, to have papers and magazines bought for her use, ripe fruits and other delicacies attainable provided; and all with the rare tact of a thoroughly loving, generous nature, was a delight, even in the midst of her ever-present sorrow.

Their arrival at the depot was unnoticed. Temple hired the only carriage that happened to be there, and drove directly to the rectory. Daisy looked out with strained eyes as they came in sight of the house, then fell back with a faint cry.

Two long streamers of white crape told the sad story.

Temple pressed his lips together. He was thinking of the rector.

"It will not be best for me to go in now," he said softly. "I will see you to-morrow. I shall stay here a week."

He helped her out of the carriage, and waited till the door was opened.

Daisy went slowly and reluctantly in. Temple had taken his leave. The hall that led into the study was not darkened, neither was the study, save by the shadows of an early twilight. On the hearth a bright little fire snapped and sparkled. She could hear footsteps overhead, but she dreaded to go up-stairs.

The door opened from the parlor, and there stood the rector himself, white and hollow-eyed. Another second, and Daisy was in his arms, weeping convulsively upon his bosom.

"Hush, dear," he said, in a broken voice, patting her as he had so often patted the twins. "We must be patient under His chastisement. It is all of mercy. Come, come, my darling — we are too much like spoiled children. We must be men and women, strong to do and to bear."

"O Arthur! how can you be so calm?" she sobbed.

"I am only trying," he said, then stopped, overcome by emotion. "God gives me strength, dear,"

he struggled to say. "I did rebel at first; but then it came to me, the briefness and sorrow of life, and I found grace to be silent."

"And Mary — how does she take it?"

"For my sake she keeps up; I, for her sake. But for the mother who was with them night and day, it is hard — poor soul!"

"Where is she?" Daisy asked.

"Up-stairs. Mrs. St. Albert is with her. That woman is a ministering angel."

"Shall I go up? Had I better?"

"Yes, child: you will be a great comfort. Go see the poor wife."

Daisy kissed her brother, and went into the hall to throw her wraps aside. It occurred to her that she would speak to Margy before she went up-stairs. In some way, she felt she must gather strength for the interview. She went into the kitchen. Margy was making the tea. She came quickly forward.

"Well, Miss Daisy, I'm glad you've come," she said, and there was a restraint in voice and manner that Daisy had never noticed before, in all the woman's varying moods. "We've had a sad house indeed, since this morning at six o'clock."

"Tell me all about it," said Daisy.

"It was the same trouble they had before, poor little dears, and they such pictures of health!"

It was pneumonia. The doctor couldn't save them; he said so from the first."

"If I could only have been here!" sobbed Daisy.

"Maybe 'twas better not," said the woman, quietly. "You haven't been up-stairs yet, I suppose. Won't you have a cup of tea first?"

"I couldn't touch a thing," said Daisy, still wondering at Margy's manner. "I think I will go up now. Zue, I'm very glad to see you," she added in a voice the reverse of cheerful; but the child hung about her, and seemed to expect some word. "Has she been good, Margy?"

"That good that I'd about made up my mind to lose her," was the answer, "till yesterday when she tied my clothes-line into knots. But she sat down and untied it, and it took her two good hours."

"I'm glad she has remembered," said Daisy, giving the child the kiss she had been longing for.

When she went out, Margy stood in the middle of the room.

"Trials never come singly," she muttered with a troubled face. "Who would have thought, when I told the rector all my story, that death was near the house? Poor Miss Daisy! She little thinks what's coming next."

Daisy went softly up the stairs. With every step that neared the room where Mary wept and would not be comforted, her awe increased. She had never seen death but once, and that was many years ago. How still it was ! She went into her own room first. Everything was as she had left it. Presently Mrs. St. Albert came in.

"Why, you darling !" she cried, "I thought I heard some one here," and her voice was very low and sweet. "Isn't it sad ? You can't think how I hate to give them up. They look as beautiful in death as they did in life. Let me tell Mrs. Prince you are here."

Another step, and Mary and Daisy were in each other's arms. Not a word was spoken, but the silence was intensified by the stricken mother's struggling sobs.

"Indeed, I try to be patient," she said, a moment afterward, "but, oh ! to feel that they are gone out of my arms forever ! "

"Not forever, Mary," said Daisy.

"It seems so. I dare not say it to Arthur; but, O Daisy ! I have some terrible misgivings. Where are they ? How can they be happy away from me ? Who will take care of them ? My darlings ! my darlings ! O God ! how *can* I bear it ?" and her head fell on Daisy's shoulder.

"Many a poor, torn heart has said the same

thing," and Mrs. St. Albert stood beside them. "I have had five children, and I am childless."

The words rang on the hushed air, the pathos and thrill in them touching the mother's heart.

"I am going to see them some day," the speaker continued, a little ring of triumph in her voice. "I know they are all waiting for me. I am sure they have had the sweetest care and better training than I could have given. They were the gift of my Father, and are being held in trust for me."

Mary ceased her sobs. A solemn joy came into her face.

"I must believe they are safe," she said. "But, oh! how my heart and my arms ache for them!"

"Come in, Daisy, and see the sweetest sight you ever looked upon," said Mrs. St. Albert cheerfully. "Was ever the signet of God more visible, than on their peaceful faces?"

Daisy stood there awe-struck. In their double crib, side by side, as beautiful as cherubs, the light from the pale rose-colored curtains falling upon them, lay the pretty babies. She knelt down, half-blinded by her tears. It seemed to her for a moment as if she had entered with them the gates of Paradise, so lifted was she by a sacred joy. Then the keen anguish of the loss came back, and she wept bitterly.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"I DENY EVERYTHING."

SOME indefinable change had come over the rector. Temple rarely saw him, and when he did for a moment or two, the clergyman was either going out or engaged. At first Temple attributed the difference in his manner to his great bereavement; but when he met with almost studied coldness, when he was reluctantly given an opportunity to meet Daisy, who was as beautiful and kind as ever, he began to believe there were some other and stronger reasons. He had arranged his affairs for a week's absence, and the days were flying by. Finally he pleaded for a private interview with the rector; and on the last day, Saturday, it was granted.

Daisy let him in, and stood by, smiling, while he took off his wraps; for it was cold winter weather now. How little he dreamed of the trouble that awaited him, and that it would be months before he could again gaze into the sweet face grown so dear! He wished to arrange matters

for a speedy marriage, and in that spirit met the grave, stern countenance of Daisy's brother.

"Sit down, Temple," said the latter, ignoring the hand outstretched towards him. "I have much of startling importance to say to you."

Then there was silence. Temple stood regarding him with a blank stare.

"I came here prepared to give you one or two incidents of my early life," said Temple, depressed at the outset by that indefinable something in his friend's manner that chilled and discouraged him.

"You need say nothing more, Temple. I know all about it."

Temple started and turned pale.

"Who could have informed you!" he exclaimed.

"Your victim!"

The rector, with these words, brought his clinched hand down upon his study-desk with a force that set all the things upon it rattling. His brow contracted angrily over his sparkling, indignant blue eyes, as he made reply again,—

"The woman whom you wronged."

There was silence again. Temple never flinched, only turned as pale as death. His eye met that other intense gaze without a tremor.

"The — woman — whom — I wronged?" he repeated in a steady though incredulous voice.

"Yes; she has herself told me her pitiful story.

It was all sad enough from the beginning; but when she came to that part where she was wooed and won by a scoundrel, a thing — no man — who deserted her and her unborn child, flung her off as you would an old glove — then, sir, I felt such a loathing that I had ever seen you, extended to you the hospitality of my house, allowed you to make the acquaintance of an innocent girl, whose whole life may be blasted by a knowledge of your treachery and black ingratitude, such a loathing as I cannot express."

Temple drew himself up to his full height. His eyes blazed with anger. He looked magnificent in his wrath.

"Sir," he said with strong emphasis, "do you know whom you are talking to?"

"I do. To a senator of the United States; but I consider no man honorable who trifles with the happiness of the woman the law has placed in his power."

"You wrong me," said Temple, who stood drawing his breath heavily, and was evidently exerting all the strength he could command in a crisis so utterly unexpected. "I demand the proof of these preposterous, outrageous allegations. Who has been trying to poison your mind with such infernal falsehoods?"

"They cannot be falsehoods," said the rector.

"It was with the utmost reluctance that I listened to the miserable story, but as the proofs came — I have them, Mr. Temple — I was compelled to believe. Eleven years ago — please listen, and make your comments afterwards," he continued as Temple tried to speak again, "you married a young and innocent girl, who was in the employ of a theatrical company. For one year you cared for her, then meanly deserted her under the most cruel circumstances. The poor creature drifted down, fighting the wolf from the door, keeping, through all, her own self-respect, till there came a time when starvation threatened her. Then she went down to one of the docks of the great city of New York, meaning to put an end to her existence. I was then doing missionary work among the destitute and outcasts. This desperate hour I happened to see her and followed her. Well, at the last minute I prevailed upon her to forego her purpose, and succeeded. That woman has been in my family ever since. Margy, you can come in."

The dining-room door opened, and Temple was confronted with the woman who considered herself his wife. For a moment he stood transfixed, unable to move or speak. Her eyes were downcast, and she trembled, moving uneasily.

"This is the man, Margy. Are you willing, in

his presence, to swear to the truth of your story?" asked the rector.

"Yes, sir. That is the man. I am willing to swear it," she said in a low voice.

"Why, woman, what do you mean?" Temple asked sternly, taking a step nearer. "I never saw you in my life, till I saw you here."

"I told you he would deny everything," was her despairing response, as she turned to the rector.

"Of course I deny everything," said Temple furiously. "I never lived in New York City a year in my life. I was born in Newark, and there was my business. This woman is mad," he added. "Let her produce her proofs. Thank God, I can substantiate my story. I do deny everything."

"I have the proofs," said the rector. "You can go, Margy."

"For God's sake, Prince, are you crazy too? What does this all mean?" asked Temple in suppressed tones. "This woman labors under a hallucination. She is crazy. I see it in her eyes. I never had a wife. Great God! has Daisy heard of this wretched affair?"

"Daisy knows nothing about it," said the rector, who had turned to the papers on the study-table.

"Thank Heaven for that! A wife! a child! New York! I never lived in New York."

"Eleven years is a long period. People make it convenient to forget in that time. New York is not so far from Newark."

"Spare your sarcasm," said Temple angrily, as he rose and began to pace the floor. The hot impatience of youth had long passed with him, but the wrath in the man's face was something terrible. When he reflected that innocent men had before now been placed in imprisonment by designing, unscrupulous women, his heart almost failed him.

"You said you had proofs!" he exclaimed, pausing a moment.

"Here they are," the reector responded. "This is a photograph of yourself at the age of twenty-five. You cannot deny that there is a strong resemblance."

"I swear to you I never had a photograph taken in my life, not even for campaign purposes, when they half worried my life out of me to get one," said Temple.

"And look at this, will you? Is that your signature, Andrew Temple?"

Temple started. The signature was almost a *facsimile* of his own. There were only one or two slight differences, which might easily be accounted for on the score of age.

"What diabolical agency can there be at

work in this matter?" he exclaimed, changing color.

"Then here is the marriage certificate." The rector smoothed out the slightly yellowed folds, and held it for him to see. It cannot be denied that he secretly feared giving it into his hands.

"My marriage certificate!" he muttered with a harsh laugh. "Come, this grows interesting. How do you know but I have had two or three of them? You might as well show me half a dozen as one. Does this woman want me to acknowledge her as my lawful wife? Is that her drift?" and he laughed again.

"No; she declines to know you other than as the man who married her. If the thing should be legally proved, she never wants to see you again."

"She is very kind," said Temple ironically. "But this farce has been played long enough," he added in an altered voice. "Prince, you don't believe in this nonsense. I vow, if you were any other than the man you are, than the dear friend you have been, and Daisy's brother, I should have knocked the breath out of you."

"I am forced to believe this story," said the rector slowly, "and I should be very sorry to have it get in the courts."

"It never will," said Temple, drawing a long breath. "I won't even plead my own case. But

I am very awkwardly placed. Here is a photograph which I swear before high heaven was never taken for me, a signature which I never wrote, and a marriage certificate that I never signed. On account of these, I am obliged to collect evidence in a private way to prove that the whole thing is a damnable falsehood, and it will take time — which, Heaven knows, I had rather spend in a more agreeable manner."

"Have you a brother or a cousin who might resemble you?" asked the rector, evidently weakening, as he looked at the superb figure and face of the man before him.

"No; I never had a brother. I never had a cousin. My father had a twin-brother, a man about whom the less said the better. But he went off to Australia, and was killed long before I was born. Even if he had lived, he would not have been a young man ten or eleven years ago." And he sat down in a brown study. "I am at a loss what to think, how to meet the accusation of this woman, who evidently believes I am her husband. Why, man, I never looked upon a woman with a glance of affection till I saw your sister. She enchains, entrails me. I love her, madly — my first love! I have position, wealth, everything that would tend to her happiness, and now comes this miserable complication. I, an upright man,

above suspicion even, among those who know me, am stained in your eyes — for I must appear to be a miserable villain. But just here I might as well tell you the story I came to tell.

“ My mother’s brother adopted me when I was ten years old, and an orphan. He was, towards me, kindness itself. His wife was also good to me, though in a different way. She was a beautiful woman, but wretched and spiritless on account of the loss of her children. Everything that my uncle could do for me, was done. I was well educated, and I hope did credit to my teachers. When I was eighteen my aunt died, and not long after that it was found that my uncle had been careless in business matters, through which he was led to commit a forgery. My poor uncle! I shall never believe he was in his right mind when he did it. Soon after discovery he died. Meantime a small fortune was left to me by a distant relation. It was but little more than half the sum which my uncle had dishonestly come by. I gave it all up, to satisfy the parties who had lost by my uncle’s crime, and in five years more had saved enough to pay the whole amount. That is my confession. I did not feel that it was honest to ask for your sister till I told you the humiliating truth. Yet, you see, I was in no way to blame — I did my best.”

“ Temple, this is a strange story,” said the rec-

tor, evidently at a loss what to think. "I certainly thank you for your confidence; nor should the matter have militated at all against your suit, rather have redounded to your honor; yes, very much to your honor. It was an unprecedented thing for a young man to do; a noble thing to clear the stain as far as you could from your uncle's good name. But—this other graver charge—I confess it puzzles me. If it were true, of course our friendship would be at an end, for that is a crime I cannot condone. I am sorry that circumstances look so much against you, and willing to own that I cannot find it in my mind to believe you guilty. Still, till the matter is settled you cannot blame me if I request you not to see Daisy again. Make some excuse to her, and then bend every energy to unravel this mystery, if mystery it is."

"You ask too much of me, Prince," said Temple. "What will she think? What excuse can I possibly make for not seeing her at all? It will look cowardly, being here, to leave my darling without a word."

"Very well, you can see Daisy here. I will step into the next room."

"That is very gracious of you, Prince," said Temple, voice and movement alike sarcastic. "But you give me your word she knows nothing of this."

"Not a word; neither she nor my wife. And, as for Margy, you cannot blame the poor creature, believing as she does. Her life has been a very sad one; and she is, in reality, the daughter of a New York clergyman. She undoubtedly is firm in the belief that you are the man who deserted her in her extremity, and will not acknowledge her in your prosperity."

"I'm very sorry for her," said Temple. "Great Jupiter! what would my brothers at the bar say, if they heard of it? What would my colleagues in the Senate say? A senator of the United States guilty of an act like that, and trying to brazen out his innocence by perjuring himself! That's the way it looks."

"I confess it has a bad look," said the rector. "And now, shall I call Daisy? She sits with my wife a good deal since the children died. We could hardly spare her just now," and his voice trembled.

"As you please," said Temple coldly. All his manhood protested against this usage. What should he say to Daisy? Of course the sad circumstance of death had abridged his visits, but not to have one last, long, sweet converse together! He had come there hoping to have everything settled. His mind almost refused to work; his imagination overpowered him. Suppose he could

not prove his innocence? Men had been adjudged guilty on slighter evidence. The thought sickened him. The mist before his eyes blurred even Daisy's graceful figure as she came in smiling.

"Daisy," said Temple, going to meet her, "I find I must take the four-thirty train. I have therefore but a few minutes in which to bid you farewell."

Oh, madness! this cold, calculating speech, and the rector within hearing — when he had hoped to sit with her for hours — when he had planned to take the midnight train, so as to have the whole evening for a farewell visit!

Daisy looked her wonder with innocent eyes. In spite of himself his voice sounded hard, and his manner was cold. How could he talk of love, of his hopes and raptures, after what had passed between him and the rector? It was simply impossible, with her brother so near, to act, speak, or look like himself. It was only when he went into the hall, where he was alone with her, that he caught her to his breast with passionate words and kisses.

"Only believe me, Daisy. Only don't doubt me; *whatever happens*, never, never doubt me!" he said rapidly. "Promise me."

"I never will, whatever happens," whispered Daisy.

"Your brother misunderstands me, but be patient. Only a little while, and I shall come to claim you. Meantime, have perfect trust, as perfect as I have in you."

"You need not fear," Daisy said, with an enchanting smile, though her lip quivered a little.

"I dare not think what life would be without you," he whispered. "Remember, I am planning all the time for our future, together."

"I will. Tell Eleanor to write to me."

"Yes — and about my writing. We will settle all that when I hear from your brother," he added hastily — and Daisy was left alone.

"What troubles him and you?" asked Daisy, as she went into the study where her brother was preparing to write.

"Little sister, it is something that I hope will soon be happily settled. Let us wait a while, and in the mean time ask me no questions."

When he spoke in that way, Daisy knew there was no use in prolonging the interview. She went silently up-stairs, grieved and despondent.

"He told me to trust him, and I will," she repeated to herself, "but, oh! what can it all mean?"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHAT DAISY FOUND.

THE next morning while going down-stairs, Daisy picked up a little memorandum book which she supposed had fallen from her pocket to a corner of the staircase. It was a tiny affair with white ivory covers that slid round a small pivot to enable the pages to be used. Each of the family had one, and Daisy put it in her pocket. Then she went down-stairs to breakfast, and chatted and waited upon table, trying to still the ache in the two hearts beside her, and cheat them, if possible, of a little of their sorrow. In this she succeeded fairly well. Mary smiled once or twice at her *piquant* sallies; and after breakfast Mrs. St. Albert came in with a budget of news concerning the church social which was to come off during the week, so Daisy was left to herself, and ran up to her room to complete some unfinished work in the way of letter-writing.

She was constantly pondering on what might be the cause of Temple's hasty departure. It

must have been some decision on the part of her brother — something he had insisted on during that last interview. Was it that Temple should keep silence for a certain time? Was his conduct to undergo investigation? What could there be in his life that needed clearing? Well, she would be patient; she must be patient, because she had promised him, lying against his heart. She must trust, and never, *never* doubt him. Had she not also promised that?

"I never will," she said, "no matter what comes, I will *not* doubt him."

Then she gathered her writing materials, preparatory to answering Eleanor's last letter.

Involuntarily she put her hand in her pocket where the tiny memorandum book was snugly ensconced. In that she kept the dates of her letters, for she was a most methodical little person.

It lay in her hand, an innocent-looking thing, yet with venom enough in its pages to poison a loving heart. At the first entry her glance was rivetted, —

"*Mem.* Margy's story. She declares herself to be the lawful wife of Andrew Temple.

"*Mem.* Married when nineteen. Proof, — his *photograph*, his *letters*, the *marriage certificate*, all in my possession. Comparing the autograph with letters from him, find similarity perfect.

"*Mem.* Margy is clergyman's daughter — suffered much, etc. Of course she has.

"*Mem.* I must write Temple down — *scoundrel!* Must have a chance to clear himself — if he can. Pray to God he may. Charges and proofs, overwhelming. Margy willing to swear to them."

By this time the frightened girl became fully aware that the book in her possession belonged to her brother. The awful accusations, things that had never entered her innocent mind, struck on her loving heart like a thunderbolt. She sat there like one changed to stone, chill after chill throbbing through her frame, never for a moment lifting her eyes from the book. What was she to think? Could it be possible that the man who had professed to live an honorable life could be guilty of a crime like this?

"Monstrous and unnatural!" she murmured. "I can not and will not believe it!"

Through the stillness rang that one throbbing sentence, "*Whatever happens, never, never doubt me!*"

"Never!" she said, with pale, parted lips.

"Meantime, have perfect trust in me, as perfect as I have in you."

"I will, I will, my Andrew," she cried with a choking sob. "It would kill me to look back in the years to come, and remember that I doubted you."

And now, having by the merest chance placed herself in such a position, what was she to do? Her first impulse was to rush down-stairs and face her brother, with these unwelcome charges in her hand. She rose to do so, but she had over-estimated her strength. A deathly faintness came over her. She felt herself falling, and snatched at the bottle of smelling-salts that always stood on her dressing-table.

"Why, why did I find it?" she groaned. "Was it a providence? If so, unkind! unkind! to him and to me. Andrew Temple, the husband of our Margy. Andrew Temple, proud, fearless, handsome, spotless! to be charged so foully! So this is the outcome of all her strange conduct. What does she mean? Letters — photograph — the — *certificate of marriage!*" she gasped. "Oh! God of mercy, give me faith, faith! *I do not believe one word of it!*"

She stood up as she said this, cheeks and eyes on fire, and had only time to hide the book, for Mary came in from her room, her eyes wistful, her manner despondent.

"O Daisy!" she rather moaned than spoke, "the house seems so empty! I find myself going from room to room, searching for something I cannot find. What a world it is!"

Then she caught sight of Daisy's face.

"Why, child, you are in a high fever," she said, with a cry of dismay. "Your head is like fire. O Daisy! are you going to be sick? I tried to find you last night in my dreams. I am hunting, hunting every night for somebody. What has happened, Daisy, to make you look like this?"

"I was thinking," faltered Daisy, catching her breath. "There is some misunderstanding between Arthur and Mr. Temple. It is very miserable;" and Daisy could bear the strain no longer, but burst into tears.

"What is the trouble, dear?" Mary asked, trying gently to force the clasped hands apart. "Can't you tell me?"

"Mary!" called the rector imperatively from the foot of the stairs.

His wife went to the door.

"Have you seen my little ivory memorandum, the daily one? I have mislaid it."

"No," said Mary.

"Ask Daisy," came from below in a still more anxious tone.

"Have you seen it?" Mary turned to Daisy.

"O Mary! what shall I say?" She flung the book to the floor, shivering. "Save me, Mary! Pick it up and say you found it. I am unhappy enough now; and he would be so angry! Heaven knows I looked at it innocently."

Mary, dazed and wondering, picked up the book. She would have questioned Daisy, but was warned by the anguish in her eyes.

"Here it is, Arthur," she said, going towards the stairs.

"Oh, thanks! where'd you find it?" he asked, carelessly.

"In the room, by the bed."

"Oh! all right. I must have dropped it there," and he went on in the study.

"How I hate myself," sobbed Daisy, "for making you do that!"

"No harm," said Mary. "I told the exact truth, or very nearly," she added with an odd little expression. "But, Daisy, what was there in it that you shouldn't have seen? It must have been something extremely unpleasant to throw you into this burning fever. Lie down. Let me bathe your head."

"It was — something terrible — but, don't ask me to tell, please; and it only concerns me," said Daisy, allowing Mary to lead her to the bed.

"Was it — about — Mr. Temple?" Mary asked.

"Please don't ask any questions, dear. I'll tell you all in time. And Mary, if you love me, don't question Arthur. That would be worse than all, for me."

"No, dear; only pray stop trembling — you

can, if you only exercise your will. Suppose it should turn to a chill!" pleaded Mary. "I only thought of Temple, because, do you know, Daisy, there must have been some trouble between them! He never speaks of him, and his name used to be often on Arthur's lips, you know. I will confess that I have often felt — that he — now you are excited again."

"There never was a more honorable gentleman!" Daisy exclaimed. "Not one word shall be spoken against him in my presence. There is a — a misunderstanding — nothing more. Arthur told me so himself. Something that will be honorably settled very soon."

"I hope so," said Mary. Her voice sounded cheerful enough, but she shook her head dubiously when Daisy was not looking. "Perhaps, if you try and go to sleep now, you will feel better;" and Mary pulled down the shades, kissed Daisy on the forehead, and left the room.

At dinner-time Daisy was too ill to go downstairs.

"Poor little one!" said the rector pityingly.

"Was there a quarrel?" Mary ventured to ask.

"Nothing of the kind," said her husband, but he looked troubled.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ELEANOR'S LETTER.

A LETTER came from Eleanor in answer to her own, on the following week. Daisy had recovered from her indisposition, and in spite of the warning of the old doctor, who predicted malarial fever, had risen from bed and resumed her duties both out doors and in.

Eleanor's letter somewhat revived her hopes.

"I have not found the time nor yet the heart to write you since your great loss," thus ran the letter, "but now I am going to inflict a long, long epistle. We are still among the gayest of the gay; and, in fact, Washington society was never more brilliant. The ball given by the Chinese Ambassador last night was so gorgeous an affair that I shall not attempt to enter into particulars. At the close I was presented with a fan that is worth its weight many times in gold. Crusted with diamonds! think of that for a *souvenir*!"

"And yet, dearest, sometimes I am so weary of it all!"

"Mamma enjoys it, and holds me rigidly to all the requirements of our social life with a perseverance worthy of a better cause. If ever I do get away from it, it will be only under protest.

"You should go with me on our church-society rounds. If I were to tell you half the squalid sights I see, the miserable wrecks of men and women who have never had a fair chance for morality, it would make you very sad. A young girl, just your age, committed suicide yesterday, because of hunger as well as heart sorrow. Oh! she was so pretty! Many a girl in society might have envied her her beautiful features. What can be done for these unfortunates? Sometimes I think I shall spend my life among them as a Sister, either here or in some great city. Do you not think that a fine career for a Washington belle? When I speak of it to my step-mother, she frowns; when I even so much as hint of it to my rector, he is delighted.

"'What good you might do!' he says. '*It is a life to be envied!*' I don't know. The world don't satisfy me, so I must try and find happiness some other way. Tell uncle Arthur to come on to Washington. I will be guided wholly by his advice, if he will.

"Our friend the senator is moping. He rarely

gives us the light of his countenance. To tell the truth, the light is quite quenched, gone out. What did you people do to him? It is only since he has returned. You remember bright little Jenny McCauly? Her head seems completely turned; she can talk of no one else but Senator Temple. She thinks it frank and child-like, no doubt, but I read her. She is in love with him. He don't know it. These great men are so stolid in matters of that kind. Forgive me, dear cousin — but I ask again, what have you done to him? He is rather a melancholy sample of an accepted lover. I saw him in the Senate the other day. His eyes were searching among documents; and then, all of a sudden, he seemed to forget, and his thoughts seemed miles away. (Of course they were.) Still, there was an expression of anxiety, almost distress, on his face, that I never saw there before. It was a hunted look; and he is so pale and grave! Again I ask, What have you done to him? Delayed the marriage? While it makes him exceedingly interesting, I do not fancy that startled, moody expression. He never smiled once during the session, and I have heard that people watch for his smile. Even while all the others were laughing at an exceptionally witty speech, he was as solemn as an owl. You might wonder why I watched him so closely. My dear, is he not

coming into the family? I believe I will send him to bring you back here. Naturally we wish to see more of him, but he seems to have eschewed our society."

"*A hunted look!*"

Daisy mused over the words. If indeed there had been a grain of truth in that frightful accusation, then no wonder if he looked hunted.

But there was not. Daisy struggled against the temptation to dwell upon the thought. She avoided Margy, and Margy avoided her. Zue was no longer a tie between them. Daisy shuddered from head to foot one day when she fancied she saw in the child a strong likeness to Temple, and then felt a quick disgust of herself for the thought. She would be loyal; she would keep her promise; and her true heart sustained her, and kept her courage high.

All through Eleanor's letter ran a subtle assertion of her love for Temple. No one else but Daisy could have read between the lines. That was the secret of her aversion to society. It was that that led her to crave work and solitude.

"Eleanor is a noble creature!" she said as she folded the letter, "far more beautiful than I, and with a larger soul than mine. What would she say to this monstrous charge — this insult both to

the morals and dignity of the man we both love?"

And so, day by day, Daisy waited. Rush Severn had come back, and, though extremely cautious in her manner, Daisy could not avoid meeting him. Evidently his long absence had not cooled the ardor of his affection. And Daisy was so miserable that his occasional visits were an agreeable diversion. She hoped that he had changed from the lover to the friend. And so he thought, but he had calculated too much on his strength.

He met Daisy the first Sunday after his return, in her old place in the choir. Many curious eyes were watching them both. She was unaffectedly glad to see him, and said so. On his part, as her beautiful voice, perfected by study, rang out under the arched roof, he felt all the slumbering ardor of his soul awaken and rush out towards her. She was still — he thought — fancy free. She had, perhaps, missed him a little; perhaps regretted his absence. Why should he not take courage, and try again?

He accordingly became a visitor at the house, where he was very welcome to the rector and his wife, and naturally Daisy felt a modicum of pleasure in his society. His music was always charming, and time hung less heavy on her hands. Altogether, his presence of an evening became an

event that the family looked forward to with pleasure.

Meantime no word came from Temple. He had not even written to the rector, as Daisy learned. And still with a holy faith, Daisy trusted him.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FAITHFUL TO HER LOVE.

ONE morning the rector came to luncheon with a city journal in his hand.

“I find that I must go to New York,” he said, handing the paper to his wife, and pointing to a paragraph lined with ink, and which read as follows:—

“M. G. Saxton, Attorney-at-Law, would like to have an interview with the Rev. Arthur Prince, once lay-reader and missionary of the Episcopal church, in New York City. If this notice reaches that gentleman, now a full rector in some part of the State, or in some adjoining State, he will hear of something to his advantage by calling at this office, 1667 — St., New York City.”

“What can it mean?” Mary queried.

“Surely what?” the rector made reply. “That’s a question I ask myself. Fortunately I have a little business matter to attend to in New York, which I have been putting off from week to week.”

"Somebody has left you a legacy, maybe," said Daisy.

"I am not sanguine as to that," said the rector. "I suppose I really ought to go—stop! missionary work!" — a quick light passed over his face, as if some thought of more than ordinary importance had struck him — "yes, I am sure I ought to go."

"Why not write?" asked Mary. A thought had also struck her. The babies gone out of her life — the husband gone out of her sight — how could she live and bear it?

"Because, as I remarked before, I have business connected with my life-insurance that ought to be attended to," he answered. "Now, I propose to go, but only on one condition."

"What is that?" both women asked.

"That Mary goes with me."

The wife's heart bounded, then sank again. She leaned back in her chair, faint and trembling.

"Don't ask that of me, Arthur. Indeed, indeed I haven't the courage."

"Then I shall remain at home."

"But will your business suffer?" asked Daisy.

"Of course it will suffer."

"Then go by all means, Mary. I will help you to get ready," Daisy said.

"And leave you here alone!" said Mary.

She did not dream what a relief this would be to Daisy. To escape from the eyes that seemed now and again trying to read her very soul; to lose that ever constant sense of being on guard against a word or a glance that might betray her unrest, sometimes her anguish; to be alone where she could give free course to her feelings,—meant almost heaven to Daisy, just now.

“Why not?” she spoke up quickly. “I can take as good care of the house as you. Besides, there are Margy and Zue. I sha’n’t be alone.”

And yet, to be in the house with Margy and Zue was the only drawback to her satisfaction. Naturally she would be brought more into contact with Margy, from whom her very soul recoiled sometimes with shuddering and dread.

But she looked at Mary and felt that her own selfishness was horrible, as she noted the change in her bright, pretty face, the wan cheeks, the hollow eyes, under which black circles were forming. It took time, and much reasoning, but Mary was persuaded to go at last; and the effort of getting ready changed the current of her thoughts, giving her an animation that had long been foreign to her.

Daisy was very much exercised over that paragraph in the paper. The rector did not say, but she divined at once who had sent the paper, for

the envelope was post-marked Washington, and Temple took all the New York papers. She had hunted up the envelope and found it at last, torn and crumpled, in the waste-basket. As if it had been some sacred relic she carried it to her room, and gloated over it because his hand had written the fine, steady characters.

At last she saw the carriage drive off, and went up-stairs to the welcome solitude of her room. Margy and Zue had gone along with the rector and his wife in order to take the carriage back. Empty indeed the house seemed to Daisy, who had never been left before with such a responsibility. For one week she was to be alone. Callers would come, without doubt, and young friends to spend the evenings. Rush Severn was sure to come ; and Daisy felt a little thrill of triumph, even in her desolation, to think he still chose to be her friend.

When Margy came back, Daisy had established herself at the sewing-machine. She heard the carriage stop at the gate, and Zue's ringing laugh. Then she knew that Margy was helping the old lame gardener — who was nearly always on hand for odd jobs at the rectory — put up the horse and carriage. Her thoughts flew at once to Temple and the awful injustice under which he suffered.

Sometimes she almost hated the woman who had made this accusation. Now she should be forced to counsel with her, all the time feeling the deadly power of the secret that lay between them. To be on friendly terms with one who had stabbed the man she loved to the heart! — could she bring herself to do it?

“What a coward I am!” she exclaimed, as this thought brought the blood to her cheeks. “I can see Margy now, without being disturbed, and have it out with her. I cannot be a hypocrite. She shall tell me the whole story, then I can judge for myself.”

She ran down-stairs while the resolve was still strong upon her. Margy was taking off her wraps. Her cheeks were flushed, her hair was disarranged, and she was laughing at some comical speech of Zue’s. Daisy was startled at the picture of health and good looks presented by this woman, who had till now been an enigma.

“The sun is hot, though the air is cold,” said Margy, then saw Daisy, and her countenance changed. The color went out of her cheeks. It was the first time Daisy had come into the kitchen since Temple had left.

“O Miss Daisy! — Yes, I saw them well off,” she said awkwardly. “It’s bound to make a lonesome house, though. But it will do Mrs. Prince

worlds of good. She looks better already. She was fretting her heart out."

Daisy stood quite calm in appearance, but inwardly her whole being was seething with mingled emotions. This woman had tried to ruin her life, to shatter her idol, to plunge him into despair. She imagined him night and day at work, striving to exonerate himself. She knew he was not idle. And here was the woman who had done all this mischief, utterly unconcerned.

"Margy," said Daisy, plunging into the subject at once, her slight figure erect, her glance steady, "I know all about it."

"All about what, Miss Daisy?" but the woman turned deathly pale. She had put the question to gain time.

"Your story — the story you told my brother."

"Oh! and he promised," said Margy bitterly, smiting her hands together.

"Not to tell me. I know that, and he never opened his lips to me about it. Never mind how I learned it. Now I want to hear it from your own lips."

"Oh, I can't! I can't! Miss Daisy. Don't urge me, for God's sake. Not *you!* Besides, the rector is gone:" she almost wrung her hands.

"What difference can that make? He don't know that I know it. I want the whole truth from your lips."

The woman slowly tied on her big house-apron. Her hands trembled so that she could hardly hold the strings.

“Won’t you sit, Miss Daisy?” She pushed a chair towards her. Her hands refused to lift it. For once her magnificent strength failed her.

Daisy sat down, still with the expectant look in her eyes.

“I’d rather not, indeed, Miss Daisy.” Her voice shook. “I’d a good deal rather Mr. Prince would tell you.”

“I wish to hear it only from you,” said Daisy sternly. “Don’t I say that I already know it? It won’t kill me.”

“Oh, then, I suppose I must,” said Margy helplessly. “I didn’t want to think of it any more. I’ve suffered enough already. But, Miss Daisy, you will believe that it cost me much to come to the point of telling. Before Heaven, it was done to save you;” and the tears welled up to the great dark eyes.

“Of course, I must try to believe that,” said Daisy in a cold voice.

“Very well, then. Let me go up-stairs for a moment. When I come down, I’ll tell you,” said the woman.

Left alone, Zue came bounding in from the back yard, tresses flying, cheeks aglow. Yes, she did

look like Temple! Daisy saw it now, and felt a new bitterness towards the child.

"Do you know my very own father?" she asked, throwing back the mass of curls that the wind had tangled.

"Why do you ask me such a question?" Daisy made answer in a strained voice. At that moment, though she struggled against it, she knew that she hated Zue.

"Because my mamma said — hush! she is coming. Some other time," said the child, and ran with dancing steps out of the kitchen.

Margy came slowly forward. She was still very pale, and the corners of her mouth were drawn in deep, anxious lines. Placing some yellowed letters and a photograph where Daisy could see them, she sat down like one weary and ill at ease.

"Look at them," she said briefly.

Daisy lifted the picture. What she saw was a handsome young man, like, yet unlike, Andrew Temple. The unlikeness was only in the expression of youth. Straight eyebrows, haughtily curved lips, eyes of the same color, hair of the same luxuriance.

"Should you recognize it?" Margy asked.

Daisy struggled with her misgivings. Then all at once her face brightened, and she spoke, for she had studied the picture with love for a guide.

"No," she said quietly, "it is not like Mr. Temple."

"And your brother saw the likeness at once," said Margy, astonished.

"A man might be deceived; besides, he was prejudiced. A woman"—who loves, she had almost added—"sees deeper than the surface. There are lines of evil in this face," she went on, scanning it closely: "the expression is selfish and dissipated. Now, such lines, such an expression, deepen with age. They can never be wholly eradicated. The features are like his, but the expression decides me. This was never taken for Andrew Temple," she said with a sort of triumph.

"It *was* taken for Andrew Temple," said Margy; "but if a man reforms"—

"Hush!" said Daisy sternly. "You hint at reformation. If the man never took any steps to find his wife and child, if he denies them both, I should like to see where the reformation comes in! No, I tell you again, that face is *not* the face of Senator Temple!"

She spoke the name with simple dignity, and laid the picture on one side. Margy's face darkened.

"What will you say to the writing, then?" she asked.

"That is as strangely like, and yet unlike, as

the picture. In the letters I have received from him, although the capitals are very similar, and the flourish after the name, he never crosses the t's or dots the i's in that elaborate fashion. This is a more careful hand."

"He is perhaps more careless now. When men grow older they seldom take such pains."

"Perhaps," said Daisy, "but remember, I don't believe," and she put emphasis into every word, "that Andrew Temple, *my* Andrew Temple," she blushed, but never flinched, "ever wrote those letters."

The woman stared at her in blank astonishment.

"Who did, then?"

"Ah! that remains to be proved. Suppose for one little minute that you are accusing the wrong man!"

"I should be tempted to kill myself," responded the woman.

"I believe you would," said Daisy coldly, "but that wouldn't help the matter. However, under the supposition that he is the man, go on with your story."

Margy faltered. Had doubts risen also in her own mind, when she had been so sure, so sure?

"Well—I—I have no doubt but that man is my husband," she said; and then, in a straightforward though nervous manner, she told the story

which the reader already knows, emphasizing it with tears and sighs that gave Daisy a heart-ache.

"And what do you intend to do now?" asked Daisy. "If this man should prove to be your husband, he can give you a splendid position."

"Me!" laughed the woman with a scornful gesture, looking round her domain. "Fancy me in a splendid position! Miss Daisy, if he offered me the whole world, and it was his to give, I'd never live with him again, nor take his name. Let the coward go. He is not worthy even of me, Miss Daisy, let alone a beautiful girl like you!"

"But, Margy, remember this charge of yours must be proved beyond the possibility of a doubt," said Daisy. "You may be wrong! I affirm that you are!"

"Oh, no; oh, no, Miss Daisy! hard as it must be for you to believe, I'm not wrong. Didn't I know him the first minute I set my eyes on him?"

"But he did not know you. A start, a change of countenance, would have betrayed him if he had."

"No, he didn't know me at first, because I wouldn't let him. You remember how I bundled my face up? Besides, I am very much

changed. I was a slim girl then, not as large as you."

"I will not believe it," said Daisy; "and remember, whatever happens, I told you that I did not believe Andrew Temple could ever be dishonorable."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AT LAST, TRIUMPH.

DAISY shut herself up in her own room after this interview, and stayed there till dinner-time. Afterward she called on her girl friends, to whom she owed visits, making her last call at Mrs. St. Albert's.

"So the rector is gone," said that lady, "and we shall be bereaved one whole miserable Sunday. Dr. Fish will take his place, and cry through the service and sob through the sermon. Why he *should* snivel when he reads, 'The Lord is in his holy temple,' passes my comprehension. But what is the matter with you lately? I shall have to come over and doctor you. 'Dar's a lachrymosical look in yo' eye, chile. I's feared yo' cries mo' dan yo' prays,' that's what Nana said to me when I was blue. We must go back to Washington as soon as the rector returns."

"I never want to see Washington again!" cried Daisy with a heavy sigh.

"Why, what is the matter with Washington?"

Mrs. St. Albert asked with well-feigned consternation. "I think I could be happy there for one solid year, but my incomparable Hugh won't listen to it. Why, it's the paradise of America!"

"Paradise or not, I like Fairstock best. I'm going to stay here all my days, and live for something beside myself."

"Nonsense; I know what that means. For pity's sake, Daisy, don't get sentimental. It's too ridiculous, at your time of life; or, as Nana would put it, 'don't get supersparegolical, chile.' You will marry a good man some time, and have a happy home of your own. That's what Providence intends for you."

"The poor child is dead in love with that handsome infidel, that's what's the matter with her," said Mrs. St. Albert to herself, when Daisy had gone. "That's what makes Washington distasteful to her. What did he come back with her for? to set people talking? He has no right to trifle with a girl in that way. Not but that it was very kind of him, and all that; but can't he see that Daisy likes him?"

As for Daisy, she left Mrs. St. Albert a little lighter of heart than when she first met her. Evening brought light and music and friends. Two days after, to Daisy's great astonishment, came a letter from Temple.

"What has happened?" she almost gasped, half fearing to break the envelope. "Has he seen Arthur? He never would have written me without his consent."

It was a brief letter, and ran as follows:—

MY DARLING,— My bonds are broken! I am a free man once more! Your brother will tell you the whole story. By the time this reaches you, he may be at the rectory. He said he should leave his wife at a brother clergyman's house in New York City. After he has seen you, he will return for her, and possibly bring you with him. Can you not come? For my sake, do. I can run over to New York easily. Or perhaps you will all come to Washington. I have seen your cousin Eleanor lately. She begs me to plead with you to come directly on. She is longing to see her cousin Arthur and his wife. Shall write you a long letter to-night — this by way of introduction. Please don't say no.

Yours, for ever and ever,

TEMPLE.

"At last!" cried Daisy, radiant, all smiles and tears; "oh, joy! joy! triumph and joy!"

She kissed the dear sentence, "*Yours for ever and ever,*" again and again.

"I can meet him with a clear conscience," she exclaimed, her whole form dilating, her face gleaming, a tithe of her ecstasy seeming to pass into her very dress, the lace ruffles at her throat and wrist making the whole figure luminous. "I can say, 'I never once doubted you — never once was my

faith shaken, even when seeming proofs were placed before me ! ' Oh ! I am so glad I did not abuse his trust in me ! I should have had to confess all I had felt and said, and in his eyes should have seemed trifling and unworthy to be loved."

After a brief period of exaltation came other thoughts. Arthur was coming home—the next train was due in an hour.

"Everything must be ready, and especially his little supper." She dashed down-stairs, nearly falling in her hurry.

"Margy, my brother is on his way home," she called, "and, Margy, I forgive you everything. I was right, and you were wrong. *My* Mr. Temple is not your Mr. Temple, thank God!"

"Miss Daisy !" exclaimed Margy, pale to the lips ; "what do you mean ? "

"I mean that everything is to be explained. Tell old Dick to get the carriage out. That's all I can say now. I'm going to the depot after Mr. Prince." And she went out of the kitchen.

"Not him ! not him !" muttered Margy, sinking into a chair. "O Lord ! what have I done ? I'll go away now. I never could face him. But I don't believe it," she added fiercely, her whole manner changing. "It's some plot. He's a great lawyer, and a great man. Of course he'll fight for it. I won't believe it."

But still she sat there, dazed and wondering, till the carriage, with the rector and Daisy inside, drove up to the gate.

Daisy had met her brother with mixed feelings, joy being dominant. He sprang into the carriage.

"Well, little one, I'm glad I went," he said. She took Temple's letter from her pocket, and held it up gleefully.

"I see you know," he said. "Did he tell you all?"

"He told me nothing, only that he was a free man," Daisy said, her eyes dancing. "And perhaps you don't know that I knew all about it. You don't know that I found your memorandum-book first, and happening to look in it for something I wanted, thinking it mine, I read your *mems*. I couldn't help it—I didn't mean to. Mary took it up from the floor, but I threw it there. And, Arthur, even then, and ever since, I have believed him to be an innocent man."

"I'm glad you have that consciousness, little one. We have done Temple a fearful injustice," said her brother. "I am glad and thankful to be able to exonerate him. That was a vile charge, and I am bound to say he has behaved nobly, under the circumstances. Now here we are home, and as soon as I have washed and eaten, I'll tell you the whole strange story."

It was not long before Daisy was sitting expectant, her brother's hand in hers.

" You have been very patient," he said, smiling. " In the first place, Andrew Temple believed he had no near relations living. He was mistaken. The uncle who went to Australia before Temple was born, and was supposed to be killed in some disreputable way, allowed the report of his death — for it seems he was dangerously wounded — to go uncontradicted. Not long after that he married a wealthy woman, by whom he had a son. But I am getting ahead of my story. When I went to the lawyer's office, I found him ready for me.

" 'Are you the Rev. Arthur Prince ?' he asked.

" I replied that I was.

" 'Did you know a woman by the name of Margy Austen ?'

" 'Yes,' I said ; 'she has proved to be the wife of an Andrew Temple.'

" 'Exactly ; and she has one child.'

" I assented.

" 'You helped her — in fact, rescued her and the child from death.'

" 'Yes, I did,' I said.

" 'Is that woman living ?' he asked.

" 'Both she and her child are in my family. She has been for years my housekeeper,' I answered.

"‘You will probably be surprised to hear that a fortune has been left to her, and a smaller sum to yourself,’ he said. ‘I have here the confession of a man who came from Australia some six months ago, to repair a wrong which he had done. He was ailing when he arrived, and the disease developed into rapid consumption. He was at an up-town hotel, and strangely enough, it happened, as we say, that the clergyman who was called in towards the last of his sickness, was the very one whose deacon you were at one time, some ten years before. It seems that this man deserted his wife, partly because he had tired of her, and partly because luck had turned against him, and he could not support her. He worked his way back to Melbourne, where his parents took him again into favor, which it seems he had forfeited by his own misconduct. He knew nothing of his father’s origin, but supposed he had been born in Australia, so of course he was in perfect ignorance of having any relations in this country.’

“So much for the lawyer. The story was a strange one, but the proofs were convincing. It seems that the young man kept the fact of his marriage a secret, though he had been several times on the point of returning for his wife, but he had launched out into business under his father’s auspices, and become very much interested

in several money-making schemes. His father died some two or three years ago, leaving him much of his wealth. Then his conscience waked up. He thought of the wife he had deserted, and determined to come to America, to the city of New York, and institute a search for her and her child. All his efforts to find his family, however, were unavailing. Then the old clergyman who had offered to find my address was taken ill and died. But the man, Andrew Temple, had my name, though not my address, which the rector had promised to find, when unfortunately he was taken down with his last illness. Then the lawyer advertised. Temple saw the advertisement, and sent it on to me. The Australian Andrew Temple left fifty thousand dollars to his wife, and a thousand dollars for me. So, you see, I shall not fare badly for my visit to New York."

"What a strange, lovely, romantic story!" said Daisy in a breath.

"Well, I don't see anything very lovely in it but the sequel," said the rector, laughing. "But I find the resemblance accounted for, for this man was a son of Temple's father's twin brother; both that and the handwriting, which I have observed differs but slightly in members of the same family. For instance, my letters might be taken for those of my father, so exactly alike is

the handwriting. Then both sons were named after their grandfather, simply, Andrew Temple. There is where the confusion came in. Our Andrew is a nobleman of God's own making. I wrote to him at once, making ample and humble apologies. Now it is my agreeable duty to convey this knowledge to Margy, who in all she has done has acted from a consciousness of right. Margy's father is an Episcopal clergyman, an excellent old gentleman. I met him and told him the whole story. He was very much affected, and is longing to see his daughter and his grandchild, and glad to know that they are both placed beyond want."

"Shall I go to Margy at once? Please let me tell her," Daisy pleaded.

"As you like," said the rector, content with his paper and his fire.

This time Daisy hurried with willing steps into the kitchen.

"Margy, where are you?" she called.

"She's been crying awful hard," said Zue, who stood with her hands behind her. "Here she comes."

Steps were heard on the stairs. Margy made her appearance. Her eyes were red.

"Margy, you won't cry any more when you hear what has happened."

Margy came slowly forward, looking very pale and miserable.

"Margy, you know I believed in Mr. Temple's entire innocence. You married his cousin — a cousin he did not know ever existed, because his uncle had been reported dead, years and years ago. He was the one who left you; but it seems he repented, and came to America to find his wife and child."

"He is living, then?" Margy said, drawing a long breath.

"No, Margy, he is dead."

Margy changed countenance, but she said nothing.

"He came over here, was taken sick in New York, and died."

"I wonder if he had any sort of care?" Margy said, in a pained voice. "It seems awful to die so."

"Yes, he had the best of care, for he was a rich man, Margy. And you are rich, too," said Daisy, breathless, "for he left you fifty thousand dollars. And, Margy, you will be stunned with all the good news, I fear. Arthur met your father in New York, and it wouldn't surprise me if he comes on to see you."

"Then I *have* got a grandfather!" cried Zue gleefully.

"Yes, and a good one, a clergyman, like Mr. Prince."

Margy had both hands clasped to her heart.

"Thank God that I was mistaken, Miss Daisy. Forgive me. I ask your pardon on my bended knees"

"Get up, Margy—nonsense," cried Daisy, laughing and crying together. "I am altogether too happy to require anything of the kind. You did what seemed to be your duty, and the event proves that I was right in not giving the story credence. *Some* men I might have doubted, but not Andrew Temple!"

Not many days elapsed before Daisy was in Washington. It was a happy meeting between the cousins, for Eleanor was of too noble a nature to harbor any petty jealousy, though in her inmost soul she knew that she should never love any other man than Andrew Temple. She had also the happiness of hearing the beloved cousin in a church whose surroundings harmonized with the qualities of person and intellect that pre-eminently distinguished Arthur Prince.

"If you could only come to Washington to stay, I would also remain here," Eleanor said to him as they walked home from church.

"Are you going away?" he asked, in some surprise.

"Yes. I go to New York in a few days to join a sisterhood. My rector is my adviser."

"I never should dream of it," her cousin said, much surprised.

"You think me a thorough worldling?" she asked, smiling.

"I did think you loved this manner of life; you seem so well fitted for society, that, though I rejoice to see you taking a step that will most certainly make for your spiritual welfare, I cannot help asking you why you do it."

"I am tired of all this display and frivolity. That is partly the reason; the other part," she said quietly and with gentle dignity, "is my secret."

"God be with you, my dear, whatever you do, wherever you go," was the solemn response.

Mary was quick at divining, woman-like.

"Eleanor," she said to her husband that night, "is in love with Andrew Temple."

"My dear wife, how can you possibly know?" he asked.

"Because I saw her face when Daisy and Temple met. Poor soul, how I pitied her! Since I know what sorrow is, I pity everything that suffers."

That evening Daisy and Temple were alone in one of the many exquisite nooks of the "House Beautiful," as Daisy called it.

"I shall not let you leave me again," he said, "never, never again! You will stay, won't you, my darling? Your cousin wishes our union to be celebrated here and while your brother is in Washington. It is my dearest hope that our happiness may be consummated at once. You owe it to me for all the anguish I have undergone these last terrible months. For, suppose my cousin had never spoken? I should have borne the stigma of profligacy and dishonor to my death."

"What does Arthur say?" asked Daisy, scarcely lifting her eyes.

"He says it all rests with Daisy," was his laughing reply.

"Then, if it all rests with me, I say yes," she answered.

The wedding was a very quiet one. While Margy was at her father's home making arrangements for the education of Zue, it took place in the pleasant Washington mansion. The banker gave Daisy away, and Eleanor was the only bridesmaid, with Everard for her support.

Senator Temple had bought and furnished a house on one of the most prominent avenues, and after the wedding tour Daisy wore her honors bravely.

Margy was prevailed upon to remain with her

father, though she never felt quite reconciled to a separation from the rector's family. When Daisy and her husband came back to the rectory to spend their first vacation, Margy was one of their honored guests.

"I shall never be as happy as I was with you all," she said to Daisy, "but my mind is at rest now, and Zue is so changed, all through you! I believe she will be the pride and joy of my life, and thank God, I can give her all she needs."

At the church, on the old thoroughfares, and at home, the bride was the observed of all observers.

"You look just as sweet and bright as the Daisy of old," said Mrs. St. Albert, as she met her friend at the first reception given in her honor. "I need not ask you if you are happy."

"I am very happy," said Daisy.

"My saintly other half was saying this morning that he only hoped after twenty years of trial,—trials he should have said, my dear,—you would be as well content with your—bargain—think of that, Daisy,—the horrid, commercial idea!—*your bargain*,—as *he* is with his! Bless his bald head, I do believe he meant it, too, though, as my poor old Nana used to say, 'dar's nothin' so *undependible* as a man, honey, fo' sure.' That 'undependible' is good, isn't it? Well, I think we are all happy, except, possibly, poor Rush Severn, but his afflic-

tion must have been sanctified to him, or to the organ, I don't know which, for he plays like an angel, and I do hope he will find a nice wife, though I'm quite sure it won't be a duplicate Daisy.” And so she ran on till presently Temple came up and turned the tide of conversation. But before she left, the merry-tongued little lady contrived to whisper in Daisy's ear,—

“It's one thing to have a handsome husband, and another to have a distinguished one, but, my dear, you have both.”

Daisy laughed back as she made reply, the dimples deepening,—

“I am quite satisfied.”



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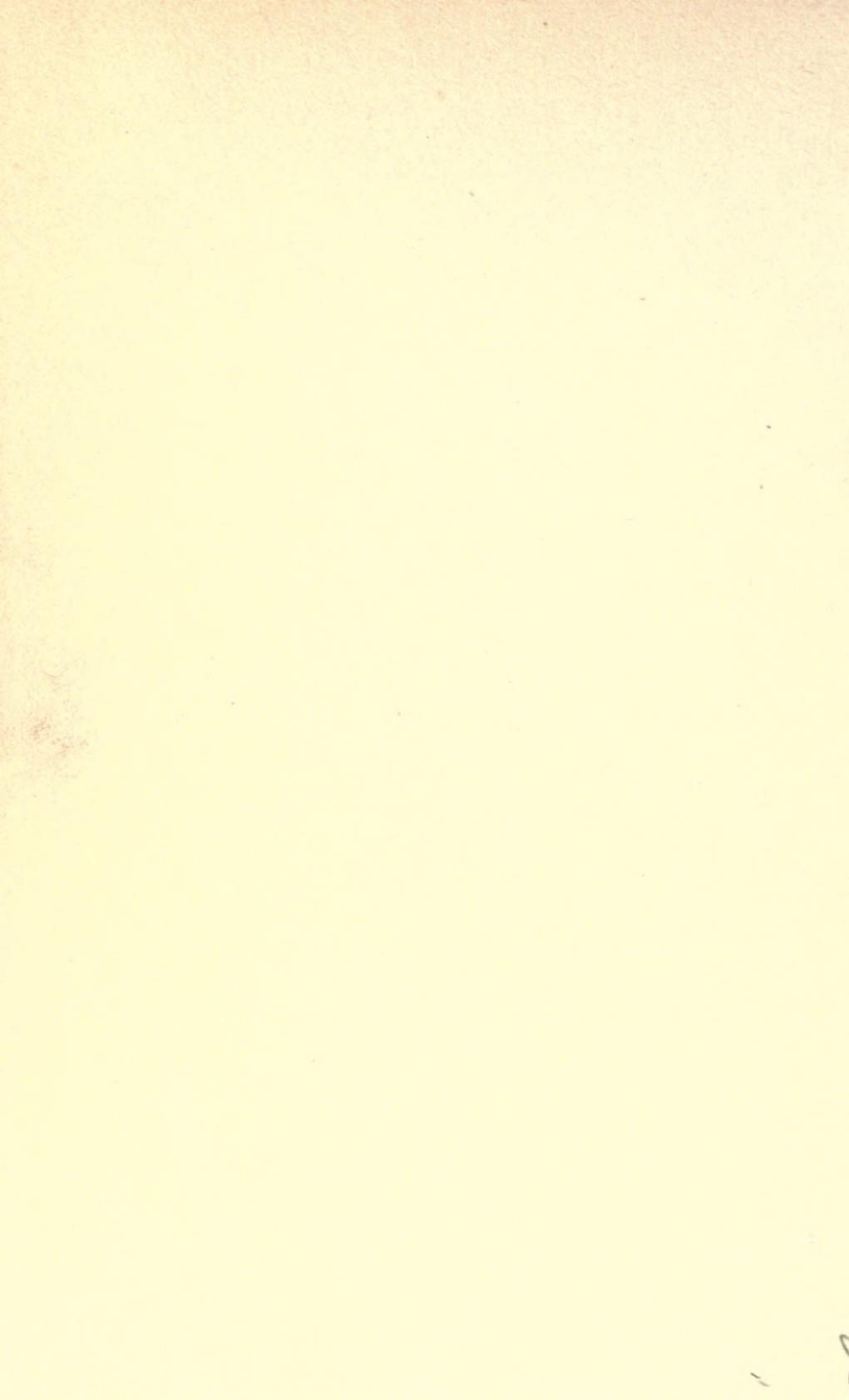
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